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LEONARD AND DENNIS.

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LEONARD AND DENNIS;

OR,

The Soldier's Life.

A TALE

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE SOME OF THE LEADING
FEATURES

Of the Present War.

BY THE

REV. E. MONRO, M.A.



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LEONARD AND DENNIS.

CHAPTER I.

WAR—THE HALL.

THE red curtains had been drawn over the windows; the fire blazed high and cheerfully on the hearth. The room was magnificently furnished. Couches, chairs, carpets, ornaments, alabaster vases, Sèvres china, a grand piano; paintings by Turner, Roberts, Stanfield, Landseer, on the walls; massive projecting gold frames creating their snug shadows in the corners of the rich paintings; enormous pier glasses, volumes of Dante and Tasso slumbering in Russian leather, and Pistratus Caxton with Mudie's name on the side; were a few out of the many signs of the affluence and comfort of Brandon Hall.

It was a dull cold February evening. The wind whined and wailed through leafless boughs outside, and cried and knocked at the window, as if to gain admittance for some mysterious phantom stranger, whom the old wind had brought in his chariot through the winter night: but the double sets of plated glass, and

the well compacted window frames forbad entrance. The family were all at home. Mrs. Loraine was sitting by the side of a small table near the fire, working with worsted; a boy of about fourteen years old was leaning over her chair, intreating, though it seemed in vain, that his mother would let him go out hunting the next day.

"Do, dear mamma, my father doesn't a bit mind it if you don't, do please."

"Oh! my dear Maxwell," said his mother, "you know how often I have told you, it is so wrong for you to go on pressing a thing you know is against my wish."

"Well, but dear mamma, I thought you might have changed your mind in the last five minutes, and that it wasn't your wish to go on disappointing your dear younger son. Do, dear mamma," said Maxwell in a half vacant tone, caused by having taken up a book which he had begun to read backwards.

There were two girls sitting at the piano, one playing and the other singing. Cicely Loraine, the eldest daughter of the family, played beautifully. She was good-looking, commanding in manner, rather tall, graceful in figure, and had a slightly aquiline nose; her dark hair was braided closely and simply over a very good forehead, while a small brown net contained the hair on the back of her head. The girl by her side was different in all respects. She was very fair, small and frail in her appearance, and had a colour, which, while it heightened her beauty, gave the impression that life might be brief. Jessy Seymour was the daughter of the Rector of the parish.

"Oh do, dear Jessy, sing that verse once more," said Cicely, as she moved her rings up her finger, and prepared again to touch the piano. "Wasn't it beautiful, dear mamma?" said she, turning to her mother.

"Very, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "only this tiresome boy will not let me attend to anything: do sing it again, my love."

"Yes, do," said Mr. Loraine, throwing down the *Times*, and turning towards the rug, putting his hands behind him.

"Dear old Jessy," said little Grace, suddenly getting up and throwing down the books she had been reading at the other end of the room. "Dear old Jessy, there is nobody ever sings like you, I think:" and as she kissed Jessy's blushing forehead, the clergyman's daughter parted the hair over Grace's beautiful face, and said, "Dear Grace."

"What a fool you are, Grace," said Maxwell turning round suddenly from the table. "I should think Jessy wouldn't thank you for calling her old."

"I always call things I love old, don't I, Jessy? you understand me."

"Do let Jessy sing," said Alice, who was sedulously going on with her work at the round table, "you never will let anybody do anything, Maxwell."

"Well now, what do you want, old ——," but the completion of the sentence was stopped by the manifest expression of public feeling, that Jessy should be allowed to sing. There was a silence, and with a sweet voice, which showed no great power, but yet such a plaintive and melancholy cadence that no one who

heard it could do anything but listen, Jessy Seymour sung,—

“ Go, forget me, why should sorrow
O’er thy brow one sadness fling?
Go, forget me, and to-morrow
Brightly smile and blithely sing.”

As she reached the last line of the verse, the door opened. A young man of about nineteen entered. He was tall, and the same features that in Cicely scarcely would be called suitable to a girl, made her brother eminently handsome. His hair slightly curling, gave an expression of extreme youth to his countenance. His dark eye, which sparkled between a keen intelligence and natural vivacity, lit up his face with a peculiar lustre, and his upper lip, which naturally curved, quivered with momentary excitement, as, unwilling to close the door behind him, he stood to catch the last line of Jessy’s song. The colour that instantly spread over Jessy’s face, and the cessation of her voice after the first verse was finished, leaving only the lovely echoes of her song lingering round the room, told plainly enough how matters stood between Jessy Seymour and Leonard Loraine.

Leonard was a lieutenant in the army; he had never yet seen service, as there had been no war except the Indian war. He was evidently the idol of all his family, the pride of the servants, and the object of no small attention from Jessy Seymour.

As soon as he entered the room, the song ceased, Cicely sprung up, and going quickly across the room, met her brother with that sort of manner, which showed

that though she had known him all his life, she was rather proud than otherwise of being his sister and companion. "Oh! Leonard, where have you been all this immense time?" said she, "I have been so longing for you to come in to read that canto of Dante with me."

Leonard laughed, and said, "Well, Cicely, I will answer for it, you would never guess what I have been about; and here's my little Grace, sitting as grave as a judge, as usual, reading away with all her might at those books, till I believe she must read them backwards again, as soon as she has come to the end of them. And why could not my little Grace have got up and come to meet me when I came into the room?" said he, as he playfully parted the beautiful curls that hung round his favourite sister's head.

Grace laughed, and fondling her brother's hand, said, "O, Leonard, you are quite spoilt, you expect so much homage from us all."

Leonard approached the fireplace, where his mother was sitting; and turning to his father, said, "Well, sir, is there any news?"

"No, none," said Mr. Loraine, "except this impending question of the war, which seems every day getting nearer to a crisis."

"Where have you been, my love?" said Mrs. Loraine, addressing her son, and laying down her worsted work upon her knee, and looking up into his face, in a manner that showed how devoted she was to her eldest son.

"O I have been out, dear mamma, with John Rogers this last hour, he is very much worse to-night, I have

been reading to him. You must not blame me, you must blame my little guide there, who took me to see him two or three days ago," said he, looking at Jessy Seymour.

"I wish Jessy would not introduce you to any more cottages," said Cicely, "for really we get little enough of your time."

"Well, I wish somebody would care as much for my time," said Maxwell, who had been playing with the ears of the dog on the rug for the last quarter of an hour, "I am sure, if Alice would say half as much to me I would leave the stables and whole stud, at least an hour earlier every evening; I would even leave old Black Bess, whom I love like fun, if Alice would say half as much to me, as Cicely has said to you." But no one took any heed of poor Maxwell's lamentations, which is usually the case with younger brothers, who, finding that fourteen never can get the same respect as seventeen, fly to the stables, to find in grooms and hostlers the sympathy which they cannot find in the drawing-room.

But tea came in, and all of them gathered round the table, while the warm blaze of the fire, the soft Turkey carpets, and the scarlet of the magnificent curtains, continued to hold out with renewed energy against the besieging army of wind and boughs, that wailed outside the window.

"Robson," said Mr. Loraine, to the butler, as he came in a second time with the coffee, and was leaving the room with that peculiarly soft tread which only butlers are able to accomplish, "I am sure I have heard

a sound out in the road, as if some one were calling out in an unusual manner at this late hour; I wish you would send out and see what's the matter."

"Sound of voices, papa?" said Alice, springing up in alarm.

"Sound in the lane, my dear?" said Mrs. Loraine, putting down her teacup.

"Now for the fun," cried Maxwell, "murder and no mistake," as he started up, and rushed towards the door, eager to be in any row that might be at hand.

"Pray don't all be so frightened, I did not mean to work up a romance," said Mr. Loraine, "but hark, there is a voice." And so indeed there was, for on a sudden, easily to be distinguished was the sound of one in the road not far off. All in the room were now listening with eager attention, and watching the door for the return of Robson. The door opened, and Robson entered, "it's a messenger, sir," said he, "riding through the village; the war is proclaimed with Russia." For a moment a deep silence fell on the room: all eyes involuntarily rested upon Leonard. It was what all had been expecting, and some dreading. For the instant the national trouble and the great political event were paled before the far more absorbing thought of losing for a scene of danger and death a favourite son and brother.

WAR—THE COTTAGE.

The cheerful fire of a cottage hearth was flickering and flaring up the chimney, surrounding with its liquid flames the kettle which Mrs. Dennis had placed upon

it. The tea things were on the table; the room had just been tidied up by Jane, the picture of a cottage girl, whose kind quiet clean face, surmounted by an intelligent brow and large hazel eyes, spoke the character of an obedient and affectionate child, her mother's constant aid and comfort, and gave fair promise of growing up to be what a wife and mother should be herself.

"It's all right, mother," said Jane, "I wonder where father is to-night, it's a very rough night, and the wind blows very loudly outside; I've just been looking up the lane, and I can't see anything of father or John."

"Never mind, girl, put down the latch, and turn the key, let us come up-stairs, and let us tidy a bit and lose no time. Half the battle in a cottage, Jane, is good management and activity, and making the best of spare moments. Half the troubles of a poor man's life come more from a shiftless wife, than from small means; and I mustn't let my Jane go out into future life without having learned the duties of a cottager's wife."

So saying, Mrs. Dennis led the way and Jane followed, and they were soon busied in tidying up the room above stairs, as they had done that below, although at first sight you would have thought that there was not a single brack or cobweb left to arrange or set straight. Mrs. Dennis had indeed learned that lesson, which it would be well that every cottager's wife should learn, that as far as this world goes good management is nearly everything. It comprehends much, the knowledge how to cook and serve up scraps in a tasty way, a kind and cheerful smile to welcome a tired and wearied husband, a temper which, having had the

whole day in-doors to arrange itself, may be able to bear a little irritability with him who has had more buffeting with the world outside. Another part of good management is a good fire, kept under with cinders and potato rinds till half-past five, and then made up with coal before the good man comes in, to make a cheerful blaze, and to make him say, "How does my missis manage with the coals? my girl keeps a fire like a duchess; I can't think how she manages it when coals are two shillings a hundred."

There are many other parts of a good manager which I have not time to describe now, such as the way in which the little bit of Sunday meat goes on dividing itself into smaller and smaller pieces, till almost Saturday comes again, thus forming a nucleus, and giving a flavour to all the surrounding vegetables for the husband and the father on whom the whole house depends. It is a first-rate school for a cottage girl to be Mrs. Dennis's daughter, and yet, despite all her discipline and rule, there was no happier little face in school or lane, on Sunday going to Church in her best bonnet, and on Tuesday going to market in her old one, than little Jane Dennis; every one knew her, every one liked her, almost loved her; she always had a smile, a kind word for each one who passed; respectfulness and cheerfulness seemed to hold a perpetual reign in her hazel eyes, and her rosy cheeks. But of all this anon. Dennis came in at last, half-an-hour later than usual, and found just such a scene as I have described above. He threw his tools down upon the ground, occupied the seat by the fire, blessed his little Jane, said a few

words to his wife about the work or the wages, and sank into a deep silence.

"I can't think where John is?" said Jane to her mother, as she put down her bread and butter, and looked towards the door.

"I can't think, either," said Mrs. Dennis emptying the contents of her cup into the bason, "I dare say he's about some good work for Mr. Leonard."

"Here he is," said Jane, as she sprung suddenly up and went to the door; it was quite clear her affections were in no small degree centred on her brother. The door opened, and John entered. He was worthy of being Jane's brother, and Mrs. Dennis's son: he was about seventeen, had the same hazel eyes as his sister, the same forehead, well made, and rather tall, dressed in fustians; his voice was full of cheerfulness and contentment, and seemed to spread happiness and joy around the little cottage family.

"Well, father?" said John.

"Ah!" said Dennis, grunting, and looking at the fire.

"Well, John," said his mother, "the tea's got nearly cold; where have you been?"

"I've been minding Mr. Leonard's night school class, as he couldn't be there this evening, and I couldn't get here before; I've got to go back directly after tea."

"I'm sure Mr. Leonard ought to be very glad to have such as you to work for him, for you seem to think of nothing but Mr. Leonard all the day long, when you have a spare moment to give him."

"I love Mr. Leonard," said John, turning his spark-

ling eye on his mother; "I would work for him to the death; wherever Mr. Leonard goes, mother, I'm determined to go, mother, if you'll let me."

"Why, bless your heart, John, Mr. Leonard can't go no where else except to the wars, for he's a soldier, and you wouldn't go to them, eh, John?"

As she said this Mrs. Dennis looked up with a quick anxious gaze on her son.

"I don't want to go to the wars, mother," said John, "there are no wars to go to that I know of, and I couldn't do anything without your wish and knowledge; all I mean is, I'm determined to live for Mr. Leonard, for he's a true Christian and a true gentleman."

Little Jane had long left her cup of tea, bread and butter, and everything, and sidled up to her brother's arm, staring up into his face, with an expression as if for the first time in her life almost the thought flashed upon her, that the cottage could possibly exist without John coming in to his supper, and holding her on his knee to tell stories by fire-light on a winter's evening.

At this moment a loud but very distant cry was heard, piercing the wind which ploughed the air outside the cottage door.

Jane started.

"What's that?" said Mrs. Dennis.

"Listen!" said John.

The voice became louder and louder, as of some one coming along at a rapid pace.

"Go and see, John," said his father.

"Oh, no, no," cried Jane, "pray don't go to the door, John." Few things are more awful to the mind of a

child, than a sound outside the door at night, when the billows of the wind make it heave up and down.

John smiled at Jane's alarm, and proceeded to the door, and lifted up the latch just as a horse rode by with a messenger upon it.

The sudden opening of the door, the stream of warm and hospitable light which shot out in the tempestuous air, gleaming for a moment on the reeking flanks of the horse, which evidently had ridden many miles that evening, made the rider suddenly slacken his pace, and draw in the rein. He turned his face towards the snug and happy scene, which, like a bright and coloured picture, peered out from the dark and murky framework of the cottage and the trees.

"What's the news, master?" said John, as the man came to a stop just beyond the cottage door.

"News!" said the man, "stirring news enough, it's war, war is proclaimed with Russia."

They did not quite know why, but as that sentence was uttered it sunk like lead on more hearts than one of the cottage family.

And when the rider had ridden on, and grey darkness had again sunk like a leaden veil over the sobbing trees, and dripping hedge, and John had returned to the cottage and shut the door, a silence sank upon the room; no one spoke; little Jane looked from face to face with an anxious glance.

After three minutes, Dennis said, as he sat gazing into the fire, "Then Mr. Leonard will go to the wars," and every heart in that room, though no voice said it, responded, "Then John Dennis will go too."

WAR—THE LODGING.

In the village of Brandon there was one short row of houses, such as we often see in the country, standing together with a row of lime trees before them; they were inhabited by the smaller tradespeople, or labourers of the higher class in the village.

In one of these were two small rooms which opened into each other, which were let as lodgings furnished for six shillings a week. The furniture was plain and simple, the result of the savings of John Parker and his wife, who had been footman and lady's-maid at the hall. A plain clean white curtain that hung over the window alike marked the lodging to the traveller outside, and secured comparative privacy for the lodger within. In the last three or four years these rooms had seen various occupants, who came and went like birds of passage. At one time a sickly looking painter came from London with a wife and five children, who came down to get country air, held infidel opinions, spoke to no one, and went back to London with his face looking just as pale as when he came. Then after an interval of a fortnight came a young man with fair hair, swell-mob sort of a coat, German forehead, and falling collars; no one knew what he was, some said a short-hand writer, some said he was in the post-office; but never mind, he always disappeared at eight and came again at six by the train. A variety of occupants had resided in these rooms, and at length it was known that a widow had taken them, with a young man, whom report said was her only child. She had been there a week before anybody saw

her; she was evidently very poor, and very quiet; the old dimity curtain was let down to its lowest fold to make the room more private. She had driven from Lincoln in a one-horse fly, which seemed to contain her all, except a few articles of furniture which came in a cart, and betokening a house that had been furnished after a better kind; those sad signs of bankruptcy! with the faded silk which once was crimson, and the tarnished beading that once was gold, reminding one of a smile on the face of a corpse, or a single sunbeam on a winter's day. These when they arrived were carefully unpacked, "and," as Mrs. Parker said, "were arranged round the room, bless me, as if the widow was going to make it her state drawing-room through the rest of her life; lauk-a-daisy, what will lodgers come to at last!"

A small group of gazers gathered round the garden-gate to see the widow get out of the fly; and a tall girl of fifteen, dragging a baby, named Peggy Tompkins, declared on oath, that "when the widow had paid the flyman, there wasn't a fourpenny piece left in her purse;" and as the same Peggy went on to aver in her own graphic language, "the widow's face was as pale and white as the soapsuds in her mother's washingtub; "and her eyes, why daisy me, mother, they looked as sad as the little print of the queen of France who had her head cut off, and hangs above our chimney-piece."

Such was Peggy's statement; and though it was somewhat roughly given, it was not far perhaps from truth. But why do we worry ourselves about the affairs of others, do leave the widow and her son alone;

and if she had only a fourpenny piece left in her purse, never mind, she had paid her fare honestly from Lincoln to Brandon, and that's enough for her and us.

On the Sunday morning after, just as the first church chime rung up into the warm sunny sky, welcoming all strangers, and speaking kind old words to old friends, the widow's door opened, and out she came leaning on the arm of her son. It seemed as if she thought the church bells had called her, and had been the first inhabitant of Brandon who had spoken a kind word at the widow's door. But enough; off she set to church, and as the same Peggy Tompkins continues to aver—for she is the only credible witness on the matter, who seemed to think it fully worth while to take an exact inventory of the widow's dress, and to con character from a gown or a bonnet—as she said, “the widow's weeds had one fold more than any widow she had ever seen, for it came right down to her eyebrow; and as to the young man, he was altogether as pale as his mother; in fact,” as Peggy guessed, “they couldn't have had meat but once a week, and parsnips on all the other intervening days.” And the same Miss Tompkins continues to relate “that the young man was altogether as kind and tender to his mother as she leant upon his arm, as mercy on me, mother,” to go on with Peggy's own words, “any sweetheart would be to his lover, or as Lubin is to me.”

But enough, the widow got to the church at last and that before the third chime was done, and she sat herself down with that same son of hers, just inside the south porch, “as if,” as Widow Barton said, who saw her

take her seat, "she was quite at home in a church, and had been used to it this hundred years." Well, never mind, Widow Barton, more praise to her if she has been.

Weeks passed away, and no one knew much more about the widow and her son: curiosity was soon quieted, and had it not been that one day the postman said he had brought a letter with a very big seal, no one would have thought of inquiring more about her or her circumstances.

That morning the young man had been out on one of his long walks before breakfast, and had come in with his usual punctuality, and opening the door of the front room, which he and his mother called the drawing-room, he found the widow sitting waiting for him gazing almost vacantly at the two teacups which stood on the table, and the piece of stale half-quartern loaf flanked by the square block of salt butter, and the kettle that wailed on the hob.

"Well, dear mother," said the young man, for now we must break into the privacy of the widow and her son, and try with Peggy Tompkins to overhear some of their conversation. "Well, mother, the postman's been, I saw him walking away; any news?"

He looked up as he spoke, and started at seeing the widow's face looking even paler than usual, her lips were quite colourless, and her eyes fixed with a stony gaze on the countenance of her boy. He caught his mother's hand in his, and kneeling by her side, said, "Mother, what's the matter? any bad news?" as his eye fell on the large and broken seal of the letter on the table.

He spoke three times before his mother seemed quite to recover consciousness, and then she turned round suddenly and kissed her son's forehead, and said, "Well, Allen, this is a fine morning, have you had a nice walk?"

"Dear mother," said he, "do tell me what is the matter, there is something the matter."

She began to speak, but her lips quivered, and her voice failed her, her finger pointed to the open letter.

Allen caught it up—the words were few, it ran thus :

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I have the opportunity of offering Allen a cornetcy in the cavalry; I am sure that your sense of duty of what is good for your son will prevent your letting any personal affection hinder this chance that he has of making his way in the world.

"I remain your affectionate brother,

"ROBERT CHILDERS."

Allen read it through and through before he was able to take in all its meaning; when he did, he looked again on that pale wan face, which had been to him in life, oh, how much?

"Dear Allen," said the widow smiling, but oh, what a smile, like a sunbeam that cannot make its way through the thick April cloud. "Well, Allen," said she, "we must begin to pack up, I must send you as decent as I can, you shall not disgrace your father's name, Allen."

"Mother," said the youth, "I can't leave you, what can you do without me?"

Ah! that thought deep down in the widow's heart had been struggling though in vain to get to the surface.

She turned and pressed another kiss upon his brow, and as she did so, the hot tear that trickled on his face, and which he knew was not from his own eye, told him how desolate that mother would be! But her purpose was fixed, as it ever was, that he knew.

They ate their breakfast and said nothing for at least ten minutes, and then the widow having gained her self-command, said, with a smile, "Well, Allen, I shall see your name mentioned in the news, and when you come back, you will find me waiting here for your return."

"In the news," thought Allen, "ay, perhaps among the dead." For last night Allen recollected that he and his mother had heard a messenger go by through the village lane, proclaiming that "war was declared with Russia."

WAR—THE TAP-ROOM.

There was a cottage in a field, in the village of Brandon, well known to every one in the neighbourhood, simply on account of its romantic situation. It was surrounded on all sides with high hedgerows, which sheltered its garden alike from the burning heat of the June sun, or the cold north and east wind of January and March. But a poor mockery very often is the loveliness of nature, especially in connection with the thatched roof and the latticed window through which the scarlet eyes of geraniums peer out upon the

green grass of the field and the vault of liquid air, like prisoned birds fluttering against the wires of their cage. In this cottage, the contrast was great indeed between the touch of Nature's boon finger on the world outside, and the touch of that same Nature on the pale face of a woman who sat this evening at the threshold of her door. On her knee there lay a squalid infant, whining with fretful pain, and gnawing both its fists between its toothless gums. The mother seemed to have become accustomed to the dull monotony of her infant's cry. She jogged her foot in unison with the moan of her child, while her fingers plied mechanically their daily toil. She was darning a smock-frock : behind her, the room which she inhabited, was the picture of wretchedness. There was a large oak table, furrowed with deep channels made by onion knives, and varnished with drippings of rush-lights; two chairs, both of them broken, and a strange looking chest, grotesquely carved in oak, while on the wall hung two coloured prints, of "three weeks before and three weeks after marriage;" in the former of which was a young lady getting over a stile, arrayed in highland tartan, while her suiter was assiduously aiding the arrival of her footstep on the second bar; in the other, the same young lady is falling neglected over the same stile, while the identical gentleman is gazing listlessly after a covey of partridges which had just sprung up from a wood behind.

The woman of whom I speak, had nothing remarkable or attractive in her appearance, far from it; she wore a lilac print gown, nearly bleached with washing, and shadowed with dirt. The continual moaning of

the child compelled her with an angry expression to catch up a piece of crust from the table and thrust it between its irritated gums; the child caught it and began brandishing it about its lips, as if conscious that it held a remedy for its distresses, but was uncertain how to use it. At this moment a little boy with a black beaver hat and a feather strolled in from the next cottage; he was evidently the object of intense pride to some mother or other; he marched immediately up to the infant, and seizing holding of the crust, tore it unceremoniously from its grasp—the child immediately screamed, and the woman startled by the cry of anguish, directly levelled a blow at the feathered visitant.

“Be off with you, you little covetous beggar,” said she, “you have enough and to spare at home, and you come to grudge my wretched child’s crust.”

The child dropped the crust, and stared for a moment in surprise; and bursting into tears, rushed away to announce the fact of its discomfiture to its mother; and things went on as before. The knee went up and down to the same tune, the child took up again the same melancholy wail, and Sally went on with her pointless yet mournful tune, as she pursued her work of shreds and patches. Her tale was the tale of hundreds—All the brightness of her life had been cut short by an untimely and wretched marriage. Richard Carter was like too many of our agricultural, labouring men, all of them too wedded to selfishness! The great bulk of his weekly earnings were spent in the evenings at a tap-room. Sally’s intreaty and word of warning continually assailing him as he entered the house, and having no restraint

put upon it by either principle or judgment, fairly drove him from his home. But though he could fly from the bitter complaint of his wife and the cry of his half-starved child, taking refuge amongst his companions of the village in the tap-room, or on the bench outside the publican's door, he could not shun the voice of his own conscience, or the reproof of his fellow-parishioners. He often declared he would never return home again, and Sally more than half believed that he meant what he said. He had three times been taken on to work at Mr. Lorraine's, and three times lost it by drunkenness. Yet strange to say, amid it all, Sally loved him, with that strange, odd, unconscious love, which lay hidden down in her woman's heart, like a diamond unrefined. And though she worried him with her complaints, and chid him for his starving child, she listened eagerly for his footstep returning home in the cold twilight beyond the hedge, and the colour would rush to her emaciated face if any one accused him of a fault. She had had no bread to-day, except a part of that crust that her baby held.

As she sat on that occasion many voices suddenly rose in the road at the end of the field, and the tramp of many footsteps told that something more than common was taking place. The beat of a drum, told that a recruiting party was in the village. Struck, as if by a thunderbolt, Sally let the work drop from her hand. She listened for half a minute, and gazed with an intense earnestness at the leafless hedge: catching her child to her bosom, she hastily wrapped round it a shawl that she caught up from the table and darted through the field. The party by this time

had passed on, and had reached the public-house. A strange boding occupied her mind, and she mixed with the group of staring, clamorous boys outside the tap-room window, eager with curiosity to see what was going on within. Sally pressed forward, unnoticed by the group with which she had mingled, but hers was a gaze of no idle curiosity,—it was the gaze for life or death. She grasped the wooden palings for support. Through the window there was plainly visible a large number of youths, who were gathered round the table and on the benches round the wall; while on their hats that lay around, hung the long, many-coloured streamers of the recruiting sergeant. Amongst them all there was one on whom Sally's eye irresistibly was fixed,—yes, it was he, it was her husband, her bodings were right enough, and worse than widowhood yawned like a chasm before her.

She knew not what she did, she dared not enter, and she dared not leave. She had stared for five minutes in stolid wonder, at the brutal figure of the man, as he repeatedly put the pewter pot to his lips; when at length, as if suddenly called to herself, she turned to a boy, who had been the last few seconds watching her, and said, "Can't you call him out to me just for one minute?" but the boy only laughed, and said the tap-room door was locked, it was impossible to get in. She had made her resolution, come what would—however cold the starlight, however piercing might be the wind which blew down that narrow lane: she would stand at that window till he came out. She would keep her baby warm against her breast, and would meet

him face to face, and say, "Richard, why do you leave me?"

Whether she fell asleep with her eyes open as she leaned against the palings, she did not know, but she got into a half stupified state. For a long time she clearly saw the firelight through the window, the candle on the table, and Richard's figure against the wall, and the constantly replenished pot of beer, but at last it became dimmer like the colours and sounds of a dream; she was conscious of being very cold, and of drawing her thin shawl tighter over her baby's head.

The church clock struck two in the morning, and in her odd dreamy state she imagined it was an angel speaking out of heaven; when at that moment the door burst open, and roaring drunk her husband and his companions reeled out. She had made up her mind exactly what to say, and how to say it, and all; and she had said it over and over again to herself, and fancied how he would look, and she would feel; but somehow or other when it came to the point, it was strangely confused; she did manage to say, "Richard, it's your Sally, don't leave me!" But he was roaring drunk, and was gone beyond her reach before she could touch him.

She went after him in the cold starlight as well as she could, poor thing; but she could not keep up with the company, and at last she went back to her cottage, she did not know how she found her way, but she lay down and slept till she rose with her baby at her breast. She wandered all day tracking his course, and ascertaining from one cottage to another, which way

the recruiting party had gone ; she overtook them at last in a town six miles from Brandon, and she met him, met Richard face to face in the street ; and he was sober now. He hung his head and looked ashamed, as she pleaded with him.

"Oh, Richard, don't leave me now ! I'm Sally you know, not that that matters so much, but here's the baby, you know." And she drew the pallid little one from under her shawl, where it lay sucking, and held it under its father's eye, "why should you leave me now ? what am I to do ? what have I done to hurt you, Richard ? I've kept your house as tidy as I could, Richard, and I've always got you a bit o' meat on Sunday, when you know I've always had none myself ; and I couldn't do more, for you never brought the money home. If the house wasn't as tidy as the Parkins's, 'twasn't my fault, Richard. If I've spoken rough sometimes, well, what's the odds ? you've provoked me to it. I'm sure I won't do it again, Richard, if you'll just come back ; don't leave me ! please don't ; I've always done the best I can, I've kept your clothes as tidy as I could, and if I don't dress as smart as other girls do on Sunday, why it's not my fault ; you don't give me anything to get a bit of a rag with ; do come back with me, don't leave me, please !"

But oh, Sally, don't you know those red and blue ribbons, what they mean ? Richard's a recruit, and he must leave you.

So somebody said to Sally, I do not know who, it was not Richard, for he never spoke a word, nor lifted up his downcast face.

"Must leave me! must leave me!" as she was walking home that dull afternoon, dragging her baby with her, "Must leave me?"

"Yes to be sure, if there is a war he must leave the country."

"If there's a war," Sally kept saying to herself as she walked along, and the evening grew dark, and as she entered the village of Brandon a horseman rode by her at full speed, and she looked up and said, almost without knowing it, "What's the matter?"

He slackened his speed for a moment, and turning, said, "The matter, missis? why, there's war with Russia."

Poor Sally!

WAR—THE PARSONAGE.

The family prayers were over at the good Clergyman's house, and in her quiet little room at the end of the long passage upstairs Jessie Seymour was sitting by herself, so sad that she scarcely knew what to do: for she had not till now known the depth of woman's love. She knew she loved Leonard, and had for many a long month. She knew she was engaged to him in a way; she knew whenever he came into the room, and she heard his deep-toned voice, and saw his eye fixed on her, that wild tumultuous feelings of unexplained pleasure passed through her: but she had always felt more like a person in a story, and as if none of it was real. But now to-night! Oh, it did seem so real!

Everything that she had been doing had been so

mixed up with Leonard. It was he that taught her improved mind to think and reflect. He it was, (for Leonard had been early brought up in the strictest principles of religion,) who had daily read with her portions of God's Holy Word. He had first made her love poetry, and with his voice was connected the melancholy monotony of "In Memoriam," the fervid passion of the Corsair, the exciting romances of Southey, and the calm philosophy of Wordsworth. All these had no value to her till Leonard first taught her to love and value them. They had been now as a garment woven with a golden tissue thrown over her mind, which dropped heavy and colourless to the ground when Leonard went away. It was for him she had cared to sing, for him she had cared to play; it was for him she had cultivated her mind, read Tasso, and puzzled through Dante; and it was his manly, high-spirited, single minded conduct which had been the great magnet to her own powers, called them out, and had given them a centre and a nucleus. To be in future days the wife of Leonard, and to be found worthy to walk by his side through the parish, to control his household, and to soothe his anxieties, had been the great and leading object of her every day. What therefore could be more desolate to the clinging girl than the loneliness of her situation when Leonard was gone? She had no substitute, for her nature was naturally reserved and shrinking. Her father, though a most excellent man, was yet one of the old school, and did not sympathise with the movement generation. Cicely Loraine, though a noble girl, and high minded in conduct, was yet

somewhat hard in her line; and more marked by good sense, as it is called, than by any strong feeling or appreciation for that which by the side of Leonard, Jessy had learned to esteem so highly.

"I say, Cicely, do read this beautiful thing in 'In Memoriam' which Leonard showed me last night."

"Oh, my dear, pray don't bring me 'In Memoriam,' I don't understand a line of it. It does very well for you refined people; but really, I have got all these coal tickets to look through before twelve o'clock; I have got to go and read to Widow Barton, and teach the third class in the girl's school for Miss Price. As for reading 'In Memoriam' it is quite out of the case. The only poet I ever read is Cowper, and sometimes Thomson, I like Scott's Marmion, that is all, you know, which my poor dull comprehension can take in, I cannot take in any of your refinements."

"What can she mean?" poor Jessy used to think in herself, "she talks of my refinements, but I know Cicely is worth ten of me, she must be laughing at me, and speaking ironically," and poor Jessy colouring up would draw into herself, and retire into some corner of the drawing-room, and sighing, say "Ah, well, when Leonard comes in he will understand me. But I always do think he overrates me, and fancies I have got powers which I have not. I hope he will not find it out too late."

But Cicely did not mean to laugh at her, nor was she ironical, but she really meant what she said. She had no value for high intellectual attainments, but she had great value for common sense: you could tell her ex-

actly by her walk, it was as different from Jessy's as the waving of the bough of the beech tree is from that of the birch.

Such was Jessy Seymour, and in such a position and with such characteristics there is no great difficulty in seeing what her feelings must have been, when alone in her solitary chamber she realized for the first time since she had emerged from childhood into girlhood, that she was to be left companionless; except through those uncertain media which could exist with the seat of war in a foreign land. She was assailed in a moment with all those peculiarly woman's agonies, the thoughts, "Will he forget me? Will he cease to love me? Will he find others more worthy of him than I am? perhaps I ought to wish he might, but still, oh, how hard!" She had been like a sheltered nook in a garden where violets bloom beneath their leaves defended from the cold north wind by some overhanging and spreading tree. The tree is cut down, and the violet and its root are exposed to the biting blast. What a tree had Leonard been to Jessy! Far wider than she, mayhap, in power and in vigour he had sheltered and watched her latent love; but for him alone had the sweets of that flower oozed through its parent leaves; satisfied to be guarded by what was in comparison with itself gigantic, and delighted to repay its debt of gratitude by the odour it shed on the sheltered air. When that tree is gone the scent of its flower must waste itself in diffusion, and wander without a resting place on the boundless sky. "I cannot understand I love."

Such was Jessy Seymour on the evening when the messenger proclaimed war with Russia.

WAR—THE OLD HOUSE.

There was an old fashioned house in Brandon of the period of George II.; report said the house was haunted, and for many years it had remained uninhabited. Scarcely a flower bloomed on the brightest summer day along its weedy and neglected carriage road; a few clamoring roses, which still defied by their waving streamers the advance and attack of time, gathered round the ruined flight of broad stone steps that flung themselves in crumbling decay from the doorway of the old mansion, the sole remnants and memorials, starting from amid the rank grass of the garden, where children once sported, or the tall figure of some noble lady wandered in the height of summer. A few picnics were held under the boughs of the trees surrounding the mansion, or here and there groups of idlers wandered on holidays gazing on the relics of bygone days. Leonard used to joke Alice and Grace about the ghosts that haunted the long corridors; or would wander round the desolate pathways with Jessy Seymour, dreaming of the past and planning for the future.

At last the house was taken, but the new comer baffled observation and curiosity. He was a clergyman, his name was Randall, he brought one servant, an old housekeeper, and that was all. He appeared in church the Sunday after he came, and never missed being at every service. All the people called upon him, but he

received and saw none of them except once good Mr. Seymour.

Mr. Seymour was shown into a small room that looked on the terrace; the old curtains and furniture that occupied it during the haunted days still stood round the walls; the old fashioned, high backed, oval chairs with their dim crumbling tapestry remained even undusted. On the table lay a Bible and a volume of Jeremy Taylor and Cosin's devotions; on another table a pencil, paints, and some brushes, a tumbler full of discoloured water, and a tall flower glass with a large white hyacinth which was gathered, and now lay in the water: the warm ray of the winter sun shone in about noon day through a window that opened down to the ground. Mr. Randall rose on Mr. Seymour's entrance; there was a melancholy about his manner, but the grasp of his hand was affectionate and kind.

The conversation was on general topics, and the moment Mr. Seymour tried to move to more definite subjects his companion recoiled.

Mr. Seymour rose to go, and in doing so he noticed on the table near the hyacinth a small red case, as if containing a miniature; he scarcely knew why he noticed it, but events in after days recalled it to his memory. This was the only visit which had ever succeeded in giving the visitor a sight of the mysterious stranger.

We may perhaps with that freedom which belongs to authors and critics enter into the secrecy and privacy of the chamber of this clergyman, and learn more of his personal history, than all the curiosity of old maids, or the other idle inhabitants of the village of

Brandon, retired tradesmen, and moneyed aristocrats, was able to ascertain.

Mr. Randall evidently was one around whom a cloud of mystery hung. "Often and often," as his old house-keeper had said, "Poor Master Henry" for she still called him Master Henry, having nursed him when he was a child, "would get out of bed, if ever he went to bed at all, and would walk about, bless him, for three hours in the passage by the moonlight; she was sure there was something unkind in his history, if any one knew it, for besides his habit of walking about, she had heard him throw the window open in his own room in the dead of night, talking to the ghosts, with which his house was haunted, which it was her private belief was the case, for she had always noticed whenever these private conversations were held at the open window, her rushlight burnt blue." However, this was her private opinion, but as the public would not give credence to ghosts and such like, she had a second creed with respect to Mr. Randall's nocturnal adventures and struggles; and that was that some dark deeds had been committed by him in days gone by, which even she, with all her knowledge of Master Henry's character, had never found out. But, however, inasmuch as this second view injured "Master Henry," imputing to him criminal acts, and moreover impugned good Mrs. Humphrey's insight into character and the knowledge of her darling child's early life, she only announced this view to her own private and select friends at her evening *soirées*. These generally were composed of Mrs. Biggs the farmer's wife, and Mrs. Rogers the grocer's.

But I should be indeed belying my character as a faithful historian, if I were to forget, that Watson, the ladies' maid, "Watson," never Mrs. or Miss, but always "Watson the ladies' maid" from the hall was frequently a member of these refined *soirées*.

Consequently, Mrs. Humphrey had to fall back on a third line of opinion, (though the least credited by Mrs. Humphrey, because the least romantic,) which inferred that poor Mr. Randall might after all be suffering from some blighted affection in early days, or some sad cloud of depression on his mind or spirits independent of criminal acts; or some religious sorrow, which like a cloud intervened between him and God's sun, for which he might be sighing in private and yearning after a change in his position. This after all may have been the complete solution of all the mysteriousness of his actions.

These various sentiments had oozed out through good Mrs. Humphrey's tea parties, through various parties in the village. Miss Teresa Rigby, a tall old maid of fifty-five, living on £75. 6. three per cent annuities, assured most solemnly, having locked the door double, Miss Betsey Tegg, another old maid, who always walked to church with her on Sunday, "that there was not the least doubt, for she had it from the best authority, that Mr. Randall had been seen struggling with a ghost by the above said good Mrs. Humphrey, who was looking through the keyhole at the moment, and that Mr. Randall had at last succeeded after desperate struggles in hurling the ghost out of window. Mrs. Humphreys had heard it fall amongst the laurel boughs." This

was the firm creed of that thin stream of good folk in Brandon, of whom the above said Miss Tegg, and Miss Teresa Rigby were the type.

The charge about some dark crime committed in former days, was believed by a much larger portion of the community; amongst others, by Mr. Philpot, a mercantile man, retired on £2000 per annum, who hated the clergy because they were an educated class: he only bowed to Mr. Randall when he met him in the road, and did not smile; he said that he and Mrs. Philpot knew things "they would not say for the world." He had inferred what the crime was, and only inferred it in the following manner.

One day after dinner, when men had been talking about "Eugene Aram," Bulwer's novel, and thought it was incredible, Mr. Philpot sighed deeply, and said he "wished it were," but said that "he feared even in their own small circle of society, there might be Eugene Arams;" and when good Miss Hudson, who sat next him, asked in a low voice, "if he did not mean Mr. Randall," good Mr. Philpot sighed again, drank a glass of port wine, and said nothing. Such was the creed of a certain portion of the inhabitants of Brandon, of whom Mr. Philpot was a type. There was a third portion, who if they believed anything, or thought they had any right to interfere in another man's private concerns at all, said that they believed the third of good Mrs. Humphrey's opinions was the true one, and that some unknown sorrow weighed on the poor clergyman's mind.

The following paper which we found on the clergy-

man's table, when he was gone out, may throw light on the mystery.

Whether this letter which we found in the capacity of our editorial or historical inquisitiveness was in the form actually of any letter to any individual, or whether it was simply a kind of soliloquy on paper of Mr. Randall's in some day or hour of loneliness or companionlessness, we do not know, for it had no address and no signature, but thus it ran :—

“Surely there are exceptions to the usual run of human beings ; surely there are cases where the stream of life neither flows so softly or so brightly as with the generality ; and if so, it must be that the great Creator of the universe has somewhere in His creation left room for the turbid waters to find their own way to the sea ; some deep rocky channels, through which those wild eccentric waters may toss themselves to their rest. And if the good God has intended some such vent, that Body which is the expression of His will and arrangements on earth, the Church, should open out means for those torrents to find their exit. But to drop my allegory, such a turbid stream am I ; I feel the torrent is rolling on to the sea, and will reach it at last, but by no ordinary channel can I reach heaven. Dark awful thoughts brood over me like angry clouds. If I have ever loved deeply, those I have loved have been repelled in the hour of my most intense affection, by some wayward eccentricity of manner or speech ; and ever when I have longed to draw to my yearning bosom some object which I longed till death to cherish there, it has been my doom to scare by my manner or my

strangeness the being I strove to attract. What perverse destiny awaits me? what misguiding angel haunts my path? I feel myself to be the foe to my own peace and happiness; my life is a kind of continual suicide; and though I see the harbour of peace ever before me, I am sure to spread my sails, and turn my oar in the direction of the wild, wide, dark waste behind. And yet I have no one to blame but myself; my noblest resolutions seem ever to have their footsteps trodden on by signal failure; when I would be full of love, I am sure to give a misanthropic turn to my conversation. Enough, I am utterly unhappy, I wander through these ancient passages, and feel as if I were without a mate in the world, and yet there have been those for whom I would have lived, for whom I could have died: but where are they now? If I pursue with more than usual energy any object that at first appears to be a true one, before I catch it my vile nature seems ever to have turned it into a sin. I am like one who by twilight pursues over a wold some fair and fleeting phantom, some shade of surpassing loveliness, and when he reaches it, he finds that he has pursued and overtaken a hideous and ghastly spectacle. And yet God knows, I long to give up my life to Him, and to reach heaven if I can. Oh would that some deep, wide, lonely chasm might open, through which these troubled waters might sink away to everlasting rest. Would there were some scene where by devoting all my energies and powers to the work of soothing human sorrow, and gazing on human agony with a view to sympathising with it, I might find a vent for my yearning energies, and in energy and employment, find rest."

Such was the abrupt conclusion of the melancholy paper we found on Mr. Randall's table, and it is no wonder that in the case of a mind so distressed, and looking so anxiously to find a scene whereon it might find a rest, like the dove that never returned to the ark from which it flew; a spot from which the deluged waters of trouble had subsided; it was no wonder that with a mind like that, the following scene occurred.

He stood in the dull twilight of the early spring evening at the window of the dim old dining-room of the haunted mansion, gazing solitarily with his forehead leaning against the window pane out into the leafless boughs which yearned and sighed in the evening wind, forming tracery for the glow that hovered in the horizon, while they swung up and down in their rude cradle the twiggy nest of the early rook. The faint light played on the carpet while darkness shrouded the wall. As he stood there, he heard a horseman ride by on the distant road, beyond the palings of the park, crying, "War with Russia!" He said to himself as he started to the door, "that will be the refuge for my troubled mind."

WAR—THE HIGH ROAD.

War with Russia! now those words have sounded through the length and breadth of the land, been heard in the silent country village, and in the crowded terraced town; and yet only just beginning to be understood even now, so full of woe! so full of suffering, so full of lessons, so full of chastisement, so full of thankfulness! It took but a few days for all England to get ready to

attend to the mighty call, and those few days were spent in Brandon with earnest preparation. There was preparation in the vast and well furnished room of the Hall where Alice and Grace were gliding across the room silently, and Mrs. Loraine was trying to discipline tears, by writing numberless directions for Leonard to take with him, and Mr. Loraine walking in and out continually with more excitement than usual for him, and Cicely was very cheerful, active, and intelligent, and full of good sense. Leonard was calm and manly, affectionate, and patient, for he had been brought up as a Christian youth should be, and he knew that duty to his country and the army was mixed up with his duty to God.

And then there was the widow, how silently she packed that one square box, and went on all day about it, scarcely speaking, and every now and then dropped into it her little legacies of tears, tribute of how much affection for an only son! But the work was done, and the single little package stood in the passage of the lodging.

And little Jane bustled about the cottage, crying all the time, while she helped her mother, who never cried at all, to get Dennis's things all ready to go with "dear young Master Leonard."

And poor Mrs. Humphrey burst into the kitchen with her hands aloft, crying "Daisy me, if I don't think he's gone daft, for he says he's going out to the war to-morrow, and he'll take nothing with him!"

And poor Sally rocked with her foot her baby's cradle, and went on patching her husband's smock, for she said, "Perhaps he'll come back again."

The day had come and the day had gone. Leonard and Dennis had swung by outside the coach. Cicely had waved her hand at the gate of the park, while a group of figures were turning away mournfully towards the great house.

Old Dennis and his wife stood arm in arm at the turnpike-gate, and said as the coach swung by, "God bless the boy." And some way on the turnpike-road, something like half-a-mile, the coach overtook the figure of one who was walking on the roadside, she was dressed in black, and as the coach passed her, those that cared to look saw a pale face with grey hair neatly put back behind a widow's cap; and some one said, who noticed her, "that she smiled as she looked up at the coach, and waved her hand, and that one on the coach waved his hand to her." So the widow parted from her son.

WAR—THE CHURCH ON SUNDAY.

And three days passed away, and it was Sunday morning. A number of people went to church, for they all thought Mr. Seymour would preach about the war; and amongst others, very conspicuous, were Mr. Loraine and his family; and many eyes were fixed on them as they took their place in the church where they were so well known. And Dennis and his wife, and little Jane were in their own places near the font. And the good old housekeeper came bustling in, talking up the churchyard-path to Mrs. Biggs, the farmer's wife, and the lady's maid from the Hall; and she wiped a

tear from her eye, and shook her head on entering the church. She looked up at an old stone tablet on the dusty wall, under which Mr. Randall always used to kneel. And that morning, too, poor Sally came to church, with her thin ragged shawl, and her baby in her arms, for she had a kind of a vague idea there was a connection between her troubles and going to church on Sunday.

And so they were all in church; and I must not forget one, I mean the widow, she was there some time before the service began, sitting silently and patiently in her well-known corner of the north aisle. It might be well to place ourselves for a few minutes in the position of some of those hearers, and listen to what good Mr. Seymour said, and here therefore is some of his discourse taken down word for word by Cicely Loraine.

He took for his text the passage from Job i. 5. "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." And many wondered what the good man had to say on that topic, connected with the war. And far enough off the text he began.

He spoke first about "war which had been proclaimed, and how many sorrows followed in its wake; of the wounded and the slain; of the broken families, and the heavy taxation; the dear food, and the anxious suspense

and delays." And he said it was "indeed a chastisement very severe upon the nation and families." And the good man dwelt long on this head, and stopped and wiped his spectacles, for the glasses had grown moist, and while he paused you might have heard a pin drop in the church, for all was so still as they waited for him to go on. Sally sighed at the end of the church, and thought it was worth coming to church to hear "such a sermon as that; it *was* beautiful."

But then the good man went on to say that "many thought war an evil without a good, that it was only and simply a wicked work of the devil; but no, surely not: there was another and nobler view of war, it had its brighter side: all sad and melancholy things were but necessary evils in the end, even though the devil was the immediate cause. For surely as the holy book taught, out of which I took my text, we see that Satan had power to afflict with sore troubles good Job; he touched him in body, mind, and estate, but it brought out wondrous good; it enabled him to glorify God, and to exercise a marvellous patience, and to preach God's gospel to the end of time by his own example and his beautiful profession of faith in his Redeemer. No: many a trial, sore enough, necessary for a good man's protection, comes from Satan. And though there will be no devil, thank God, in heaven, yet they fitted men to go there, and without them men would not have the chance of being half so good as they were.

"Now what those trials were to man, so war was to nations; nations needed their chastisement and their discipline; they wanted these chances and opportunity

for bringing out national graces and virtues; and it would be a false view of peace, if we gained it by compromise of right through weak consciences and dread of strife; just as it would be a false view of a good man, if we were to say he could be formed without trial or temptation.

"A nation has virtues all its own: nations will be judged as nations, in their collective capacity. Nations are punished for their national sins, as Nineveh, Babylon, and Jerusalem. Nations as nations are rewarded, and blest as nations, and will stand to be judged at the last day; and in heaven, we are told, the nations 'will bring their glory' into it.

"So nations have their virtues and vices and moral responsibility. Seeking God first; the promotion, defence, and protection of His Church and poor; generosity and noble-heartedness; forgiveness of injury, and peacemaking; courage and firmness, are among the leading virtues of a nation. But no man or nation can shine in a virtue unless they have exercised it, and they cannot exercise it without the opportunity. Sorrow must give the opportunity for patience, and conflict with others the chance of exercising forgiveness.

"A nation, then, must come into contact with others to exercise forgiveness, generosity, and desire to make peace. She must have the opportunity of asserting her defence of high principle by finding others attacking and impugning truth, and if when this is done, a nation compromises truth for the sake of peace and quiet, barter the Creed for commerce, and sells the Church for mercantile position and aggrandisement, she

falls morally. War gives a nation the opportunity of asserting high principle through suffering and anguish.

“ But besides this, there is ever a chance of a nation without strife falling back into a dull indifferentism: the sorrows of the wounded and the dying on the battle-field, the forlorn condition of the widow and orphan, the draught of soldiery, the prisoner and the captive, evoke from the public, as they can do in England, feelings of mercy, energy, and compassion for their fellow-men. In attending to these calls, the nation will open her slumbering eyes to the presence, and claims, and fitness of the Church, as the guide and almoner of her bounties. The beauty of her machinery, the elevation of her aims, the measure of her influence, will become known and appreciated by a hitherto careless and negligent public; her worship attended, her laws obeyed, and her doctrines valued. When nations lie in slumber unroused by the trumpet-call to war and movement for the sake of principle, they sink back into a state of selfishness and narrowmindedness; their condition becomes dreamy rather than real; ideal rather than practical. I cannot say that war is an unmitigated evil.”

Here the good man paused a moment, for there *was* much coughing in the church. Many ladies turned, and gentlemen looked round and told their little boys to be quiet. It was very plain that this doctrine was somewhat new to some and not altogether palatable, and the congregation showed it.

The clergyman stayed till the coughing was over, and then went on to his more practical point, and that

indeed to which his text more immediately directed attention.

"The holy patriarch," said Mr. Seymour, and here his voice a little wavered, and he moved his spectacles; "the patriarch," said he, "so great and powerful and magnificent, still showed a humble and dependent mind on the great Ruler of the world; he thought of his absent children, and remembering them, prayed for them." And here the clergyman stopped again, for the congregation became deeply silent and attentive; and Jessy, whose motionless form had remained in the pew close under her father through all the earlier part of the sermon, moved her hand and coughed.

"Yes, I say," said he, "prayed for his absent children, for he knew not how they were going on, and feared lest the ever busy tempter or the sorrows which belong to our race, might have overtaken and successfully assailed them; he knew not what they might be doing, or what they might be suffering away from him."

Here Mrs. Dennis sighed deeply, and Dennis leant forward, and placed his elbow on the back of the seat before him, and his hands on his forehead, while he fixed his eye on the clergyman, feeling, as he said afterwards, that he "had never heard such a sermon." Mr. Loraine too looked up, and Cicely half smiled.

"And notice, my brethren," said Mr. Seymour, "the patriarch was very exact in his consideration—he made his devotions exactly accordant with the number of his children, and this he did 'continually.' I would moreover draw your attention to another sad circumstance; sad at least when our human feelings are

considered," and here the good man sighed, as if fearing he might needlessly wound any present, still feeling it his duty to show the practical lesson and bearing of his sermon, "all his children came to an untoward end. Though indeed we must consider that the holy tale is not only a reality, but is to us a kind of allegory; for when good Job had quite learnt his lesson and been brought to the pavement, as it were, all his children were around him again, teaching us, surely, dear brethren," and here the preacher looked up, and spoke with touching earnestness, "teaching us, that if we, who may be severed from our children or very dear friends by war or what not, we learn God's good lesson, and find out our fault and mend it, and humble ourselves deeply before Him, even if we be as good and holy as Job, the LORD will bring us to our children again and them to us, and if not here in this brief stage of human events, still in another and better scene hereafter.

"But now, good brethren, what lesson do we learn from holy Job for our absent friends? and I will drop my disguise and speak more plainly. You all know that many of our good people of Brandon have gone in the past week, called by the Queen and their sense of duty and honour, God bless them, to the seat of war. Indeed the eyes of many have been on that parting ship: the widow of the good honest labourer, the wealthy and honoured magistrate, and the—" but here Mr. Seymour, as was his wont, wiped his spectacles, for he thought of Jessy and he could not finish the sentence. "Dear brethren, what shall we do for these absent dear ones?" The stillness was so deep that you might have heard a pin drop:

"For surely remember the scene of peril and danger they are in. Disease, the bayonet, the bullet, a foreign land and clime, want, and a hard winter, the storm at sea, or the unwonted cold, may affect them sorely; and constitutions cherished by kind home care, and sorrows cheered by gentle home voices may find rough usage there.

"But I will leave you to fill up the detail. We should secondly, bearing all this in mind, do what Job did, look to ourselves first and feel that God may perhaps punish or save the son for the parent's fault or the parent's penitence and holiness; for there seems a kind of connection between Job's personal religious worship and his children's estate. So, dear brethren, let me beg you, if you feel that there is a fault in you which you know God has often warned you of,—any loose-speaking or swearing, any neglect of prayer and worship, any too clinging love to the world or money, any discontent and complaining, any pride or vanity, put it away by God's help, not only for your own but for your children's sake. And be assured that by striving to unfurl the sail of a holy life, you will not only hasten your own approach to the heavenly shore, but speed much the well-being of those absent ones whom you love; and draw, as it were, their vessels in your own track into calmer and more peaceful waters.

"But again, surely Job's example will teach us the duty of earnest united prayer. And families should pray with their united members for the absent one, and strive to recollect before the good God all the possible troubles, spiritual or temporal, which they may have to

endure. And let these united prayers ascend daily and earnestly to the seat of grace and mercy ; and indeed I should strongly urge the duty of all people in the parish offering up prayer for the absent soldiers and sailors, whether they have special relatives in the war or no.

“ But Job’s act seems to point to something still beyond this, it refers more immediately to a public act, ‘a sacrifice’ for his absent children. Should we not consider the duty and efficacy of receiving the Holy Communion often, that great Sacrifice of prayer and praise ? and if you have hitherto been negligent of it altogether, do begin to receive it, and if you have been but a seldom attendant, do receive it frequently.

“ And indeed, while speaking of Holy Communion, I might urge the force and fitness of attendance at daily service, especially during the present awful war. There and then we pay special respect to Almighty God, humble ourselves before Him, confess our sins, and unite in prayer for those engaged in the foreign war ; so, dear brethren, I should strongly urge on you the fitness of attendance at the daily prayers in Church.

“ But I will, please God, from time to time through the present war, draw your attention, good people, not only to your duty as it concerns yourselves, but as it concerns those who are away ; and frequently bring before you your position and responsibility with regard to the sad and solemn scenes around us.

“ May the good and kind God comfort, aid, and guide you, and guard and preserve them ! May we be drawn together by one common interest and common sorrow to a greater love and sympathy, and feel more than

ever as a family in CHRIST! May we recollect constantly, the blessedness of His having taken our nature upon Him whereby He is so able to sympathize with our sorrows, to heal the woe of the wounded and the aching heart of the unhappy. 'For He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'"

As the good people walked down the road after the clergyman's sermon they all felt wonderfully drawn together, as if they were members peculiarly of one family. A still silence marked their return home; and the bleating of the new born lambs in the field, and the cawing of rooks just beginning to build their nests, were nearly the only sounds of the early spring morning. Mr. Loraine spoke with kindness to the widow, and Mrs. Loraine dropped her husband's arm to shake hands with her, Cicely walked home by the side of Mrs. Dennis, and took little Jane by the hand. And the good old housekeeper made up to Sally and bid her come up to the old mansion and she would "give her her dinner, and find her, no doubt, a shawl in place of the rag, which," as Mrs. Humphrey said to Miss Dickson, "no proper person ought to wear."

I shall not soon forget too how little Alice took Jessy's hand and without speaking went home with her through the thick yew-tree walk which led to the parsonage.

So the war began to show some fruit by drawing together the cords of love, sympathy, and brotherhood in the parish of Brandon. It drew together rich and poor, softened recrimination, and made the people bear with and understand each other.

And when good Mr. Seymour next Sunday saw all of them at Holy Communion and some of them at the daily service between the Sundays, he could not help saying to himself, "Then even the dark, melancholy time of war may bring forth a wholesome and refreshing fruit."

Family Prayers, drawn up by Mr. Seymour, for the inhabitants of Brandon, during the War.

I.—SENTENCES.

It was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed GOD in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. *Job* i. 5.

The name was called Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. *Gen.* xxxi. 49.

It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. *Ex.* xvii. 11.

And the LORD shall utter His voice before His army :

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning :

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your GOD : for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. *Joel* ii. 11—13. .

II.—CONFESSION.

Turn Thou us, O good LORD, and so shall we be turned. Be favourable, O LORD, be favourable to Thy people, who turn to

Thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For Thou art a merciful GOD, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, and in Thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare Thy people, good LORD, spare them, and let not Thine heritage be brought to confusion. Hear us, O LORD, for Thy mercy is great. And after the multitude of Thy mercies look upon us; through the merits and mediation of Thy blessed SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

III.—LORD'S PRAYER.

LORD, have mercy upon us.

CHRIST, have mercy upon us.

LORD, have mercy upon us.

Our FATHER, Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil. Amen.

IV.—PSALM.

1 Deliver me from mine enemies, O GOD: defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 O GOD, Thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad: Thou hast also been displeased; O turn Thee unto us again.

3 Thou hast moved the land, and divided it: heal the sores thereof, for it shaketh.

4 Thou hast showed Thy people heavy things: Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine.

5 Thou hast given a token for such as fear Thee: that they may triumph because of the truth.

6 Nevertheless, though I am sometime afraid: yet put I my trust in Thee.

7 I will praise GOD, because of His word: I have put my trust in GOD, and will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

8 Whosoever I call upon Thee, then shall mine enemies be put to flight: this I know; for GOD is on my side.

9 Thou, O GOD, hast taught me from my youth up until now : therefore will I tell of Thy wondrous works.

10 Forsake me not, O GOD, in mine old age, when I am gray-headed : until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to all them that are yet for to come.

11 Thy righteousness, O GOD, is very high : and great things are they that Thou hast done ; O GOD, who is like unto Thee ?

12 Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep : show Thyself also, Thou that sittest upon the cherubims.

13 Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses : stir up Thy strength, and come, and help us.

14 Turn us again, O GOD : show the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

15 O LORD GOD of hosts : how long wilt Thou be angry with Thy people that prayeth ?

16 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears : and givest them plenteousness of tears to drink.

17 Thou hast made us a very strife unto our neighbours : and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

18 Turn us again, Thou GOD of hosts : show the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

19 I called upon the LORD in trouble : and the LORD heard me at large.

20 The LORD is on my side : I will not fear what man doeth unto me.

21 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me : therefore shall I see my desire upon mine enemies.

22 It is better to trust in the LORD : than to put any confidence in man.

23 It is better to trust in the LORD : than to put any confidence in princes.

24 The LORD is King, be the people never so impatient : He sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.

Glory be to the FATHER, and to the SON : and to the HOLY GHOST ;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

V.—LESSON.

If Thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever Thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which Thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for Thy Name : Then hear Thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against Thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and Thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near : Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto Thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness ; And so return unto Thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto Thee toward their land, which Thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy Name : Then hear Thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause. And forgive Thy people that have sinned against Thee, and all their transgression wherein they have transgressed against Thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them : For they be Thy people, and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron.

VI.—MAGNIFICAT.

My soul doth magnify the LORD : and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my SAVIOUR.

For He hath regarded : the lowliness of His hand-maiden.

For behold, from henceforth : all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath magnified me : and holy is His Name.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him : throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat : and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things : and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel : as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the FATHER, and to the SON : and to the HOLY GHOST ;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

VII.—2ND LESSON.

We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding ; that ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of GOD ; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the FATHER, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

VIII.—THE CREED.

I believe in GOD the FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in JESUS CHRIST His only SON our LORD, Who was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell ; The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of GOD the FATHER Almighty ; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. .

I believe in the HOLY GHOST ; the holy Catholic Church ; The Communion of Saints ; The Forgiveness of sins ; The Resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

IX.—PRAYERS.

The Collect for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

Grant, we beseech Thee, merciful LORD, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

The Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Grant, O LORD, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

The Collect for All Saints' Day.

O Almighty GOD, Who hast knit together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of Thy SON CHRIST our LORD; Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

A Prayer for Unity.

O GOD the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our only SAVIOUR, the Prince of Peace; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and FATHER of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

O LORD, Who seest all alike in every place, and at every time; Guard and protect our children, parents, and brothers, our friends and relations in the war; defend them alike from

the terrors by night, and from the sickness that destroyeth in the noon day; and though a thousand fall beside them, and ten thousand at their right hand, let Thine eyes be on those for whom we pray, and let Thy pitifulness and truth be their shield and buckler. If they shall fall wounded, heal and bind them up; if they are desolate and sad, show Thyself to them as One that sticketh closer than a brother, and hast compassion on their infirmities. If it be Thy will that they should die, O LORD, so let them take Thy visitation that this painful life ended, they may dwell with Thee in life everlasting; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

O LORD, grant that those for whom we pray, who by Thy providence are exposed to the troubles and dangers of the war abroad, may in their calamities acknowledge Thine hand, and search into their hearts and lives to discover the sins which they have committed, for which Thou art chastening us and them; and give them grace so to repent as to appease Thy wrath, and to bring down a message of mercy to them, to us Thy servants, and to Thy Church; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST, be with us all evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE—THE TENT.

AT midnight on the 18th of September, a night ever memorable in the annals of British warfare, a small group of English soldiers, and one or two other men interspersed amongst them, were gathered under a

kind of awning, which they had erected for a tent, on the extreme left of that long array, that marked the lines of Great Britain.

The long peace of forty years had made Waterloo and Salamanca fables of the past; and it was no easy matter to get rid of the impression, that war itself was but the story of a dream, her cannons and her trumpets, the cries of her wounded, and the shouts of her conquerors, anything more than those mysterious and awful sounds we shudder at in a nightmare, or are glad to be freed from by the waking of the morning. Men it is true, had often talked of war, and the foreign news of *The Times* had sometimes awaked in the young the hope that they were to see for themselves the scenes which they had heard described by their fathers; and in the aged, a dread, lest the horrors of a bygone age were to be repeated on the confines of Austria, or the frontier lands of the Himalayas or the Indus. But the corpse of Wellington had been borne to his stately burial; and we had begun to think that the dome of St. Paul's shut out alike from the gaze of the world the dust of the conquerors of Trafalgar and Waterloo, the possibilities of battles, and the realities of war. But it was to be otherwise: man had been mistaken in his calculations; and God was going to govern the world after His own laws. "The sound of war shall be heard no more" was to be a motto not engraven on the world's escutcheon, until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His CHRIST."

The small company whom we have just described were peculiarly open to feelings of this kind. They were

full of wonder and excitement as to the new scene into which they had just entered ; full of expectation of winning honours, and sending home their names with some high mention from those in authority to gladden the hearts of those who were anxious there ; yet they had all those feelings of anxious apprehension, which must ever belong to every human being, when he feels how nearly he stands to the possible dissolution of his mortal condition. And this is more peculiarly the case with those, who having been brought up in the fear of God, and the expectation of the judgment-day, have been led to feel that death is not the lonely step of a solitary visitant, but is ever and assuredly followed by another tread more awful still, sounding in the wake of his footstep, that of the archangel who summons us to the judgment-bar.

It was with these latter feelings more than with the former that the minds of Leonard and Dennis and others who made up the group were occupied, when on the night in question they had gathered under the shelter of the tent, for they had long since given up the idea of sleep, and found a vent for their feelings and excitement in general conversation. As has been often the case in the present war, the well-known faces of their own villages or neighbourhood greeted and cheered the soldier in his distant sphere of peril : the barriers of society were, to a great degree, broken down, at least in the heart, when the officer recognised in the countenance of the private, the son of his father's lodge-keeper, or the youth who had been brought up in the Sunday school of his own village.

I shall throughout the narration of the ensuing events rather assume the affix which was given to the regiment of those, with whom we are particularly concerned, than the actual name of the regiment itself; and as Colonel Clifton, a well tried, and deeply respected officer in the British army, led on the regiment to which Leonard and Dennis, and some other of our friends were attached, this regiment was usually called amongst the soldiers, "Clifton's men," or for abbreviation, "the Cliftons." The others who made up the group in question, consisted of Mr. Randall, and three or four officers of Clifton's regiment; Dennis being present rather in the capacity of a servant to Leonard, than a private in his regiment.

"We have been talking of the Crimea, so long," said Leonard, who was nearest the entrance of the tent, with his arms folded and his eyes gazing out in the direction where, under the night sky, they knew the foe was waiting for them. "We have talked a great deal of the Crimea, but I declare, Mr. Randall, I do not know what the Crimea means; I have a sort of impression that it is a very old country, and that every scholar ought to know a great deal about it; but I fear I do not know much. Still I have a very strong idea, that the ground on which we tread, is classic ground; and belongs even more to ancient history, than to modern. You as a clergyman, I suppose, know all about this. And then again, who those Cossacks are, of whom we saw a specimen yesterday."

Mr. Randall, who in spite of his taciturn and silent disposition, as it appeared to those who slightly knew him,

smiled on this appeal of the young officer; especially when he knew that the deeper thoughts of all present were engaged in deeper things. But Mr. Randall's education in the school of his own heart had taught him this lesson of human nature, that men ever put pickets and outposts to sentinel the camps of their deepest and real selves; the under current of the stream is ever the real mass of waters which affects the direction of the whole. The upper current, though the one that meets the eye with all its flashing light, is ever thin and superficial: and when our minds are really anxious about the deepest things of life, we are sure then to talk of trifles. When a man is dying in the room, we long to talk of a medicine bottle; and when we have come home from a funeral, we love to talk of the weather.

"O yes," said Mr. Randall, "there is a great deal to do with the past connected with this place; it used to be called Taurica Chersonesus, and is famous for very many tales of mythological and ancient times. The little Sea of Azof, which lies on the north-east there, used to be called the Palus Mæotis."

"O yes, I remember," said Leonard, "old Ovid talks about it."

"Yes, he does," said Mr. Randall, "and most ancient writers."

"And that little strait which joins it to the Euxine, used to be called Cimmerian Bosphorus, was not it?"

"Yes, quite right," said Mr. Randall, "why we are going to school again in camp; you remember your old school days, Mr. Loraine, capitally."

"Stay a moment, I'll do more than that," said

Leonard, "here are the lines for it, does not Virgil say in the third Georgic, somewhere, 'Qua Scythiæ gentes Mæoticaque unda,' and then something about 'turbidus ista?'"

"Yes, he does," said Mr. Randall, "you are quite right; tax your memory again if you can remember some other passage."

"Yes, stay a moment, here it comes," said Leonard, "in the sixth *Æneid*, is not it?"

"That is right," said Mr. Randall.

"Now then,

*'Hujus in adventu jam nunc et Caspia regna
Responsis horrent divûm et Mæotica tellus.'*"

"Bravo!" said Mr. Randall, "I am clearly acting the schoolmaster abroad, if not Dr. Syntax in the war. This strange quadrangular corner of the Crimea, was inhabited by a race of people called the Tauri, who were peculiar for their cruel and savage manners, and sacrificed all strangers, who visited their shores, to the goddess Diana. You, Leonard, who seem to have such a good recollection of your school education, will not find it difficult to remember the tales of Pylades and Orestes; and the sacrifice of Iphigenia; the Crimea was the scene connected with all those transactions, and is, therefore, as we may well call it, classic ground.

"The drama of Iphigenia by Euripides, termed in one portion of it, Iphigenia in Aulide, and in the other Iphigenia in Tauride, is based on the following idea. The Grecian fleet being detained by contrary winds off the coast of Bœotia, the king was told by the priest

Calchas, that he must sacrifice his daughter to appease the tempest. Euripides supposes that the young princess at the very crisis of her sacrifice, was preserved by the goddess Diana, to whom she was to be offered, and transported from Aulis in Bœotia, to Tauris, the present Crimea, while a hind of extraordinary size and beauty, was offered in her stead. There seems a singular connection, in the mind of the Grecian poet, with the stories of Abraham and his son Isaac, and Jephthah and his daughter. And it becomes one out of the many evidences of the revelations of eternal truth having floated, like scattered leaves on the wind, to the oracular temples of Greece, and the sacerdotal cells of Egypt.

"The mythological tale goes on thus : Orestes, bidden by an oracle, comes with Pylades to the Crimea, impelled by madness to seize the image of the goddess ; on disembarking, he was seen by the inhabitants, and dragged to the temple to be sacrificed ; he there finds his sister Iphigenia ; and the three together, after a consultation, seize the sacred image, and bear away it, as well as the daughter of Agamemnon, home to Greece."

"Thank you," said Leonard. "I remember it all accurately enough, now ; it certainly gives a good deal of interest to the position we occupy now, when we connect it with our schoolboy days, and the times of yore ; it seems as if the classical education was not thrown away even upon a soldier."

"The intermediate history of the Crimea," said Mr. Randall, who seemed evidently glad to keep his thoughts on a subject not painful to an evidently usually unhappy mind, "the intermediate history of the Crimea is mixed

up with the invasion of the Tartars, whose wandering and equestrian habits connect them again with the Scythian of old, and the long cherished desires of the Muscovite to achieve the possession of the Crimea as the great key to the East."

"Ay, there is the point," said Captain Dugald, who had struck up a recent friendship with Loraine, and was sitting in the tent with the rest, "there is the point. Why is it that Russia makes so much of this Crimea? Why is it that we have thought there was no point so vulnerable as this in the vast empire of the autocrat in the present war? For though they say that we soldiers are only born to be good for powder and shot, and to go exactly where we are bidden without inquiry; there does sometimes come a slight inclination to ask a sly question or two as to the motives, and the reasons which impel the government at home."

"Well," said Mr. Randall, "the great strength of the Crimea, as you know, is the fort of Sebastopol; which by its magnificent position can harbour a fleet strong and large enough to command the whole Euxine. The Euxine by its being the high road to Trebizond, Sinope, and Anapa, to say nothing of its fringe of mighty rivers in which its northern and western shores fray off, including the Danube, the Dnieper, Dniester, and the Don; the narrow outlet to the Mediterranean by the Bosphorus, and the approach by the sea of Azof to the north-east, is of the utmost importance to those that hold it, and gives that power the chance of attaining a great position in the world. There is very little doubt that one great secret of the gigantic

strength of Rome in old days lay in the possession to a certain degree of the Black Sea; and the reason that we are so anxious to check the power of Russia at Sebastopol is the dread lest she also may attain the same overbearing position in Europe as Rome did of old; a position which we are by no means willing to cede to her."

"Thank you," said the Captain, "your statement is very lucid, and very much clears up my mind."

"But," said Leonard, having sunk down in a meditative posture, and gazing down on the turf at the door of the tent, and out on to the steppes of grassy land, "but—ah, well!"

"But what," said Mr. Randall, turning suddenly to his young friend, "what were you going to say?"

"Well, I don't know," said Leonard, "perhaps it was rather foolish, better leave it where it was."

At that moment a cannon boomed across the deep, fired from one of the British vessels from the sea, echoing solemnly and sadly on the air of the deep stillness of the Crimean twilight.

"Well," said Leonard, "what I was going to say was this; but I rather hate unreality; I was going to say, Is not it rather strange that we are talking of the classical associations of the Crimea when in a few days it may be stained with our life blood?"

A deep sigh broke from Mr. Randall's bosom which seemed to say, "Ah, there you have insisted on opening the door of the cage for that dark bird to sail out into the twilight chamber of my mind, which I had been trying so earnestly for the last few hours to keep pent in."

"Well, Mr. Loraine," said he, "I suppose the

truth is, is it not, that we are all talking trifles, while we are thinking deeper things? and that is peculiarly the soldier's way, is it not? Feathers and dead leaves float on the surface of the river, but stones or jewels sink. They say that the heavier clouds brood close over the surface of the earth's bosom, while the lighter ones play away towards the more cheerful sky. Thunderstorms lie on the mountain side, and touch with their trail even the lofty tree; while the glittering cumuli which circle the sunset lie far away beyond the touch of our material world. I suppose that our really deep thoughts are not the ones that shine the brightest or attract most notice. And that is, I suppose, the history of what is called reserve in religion, which is so peculiarly, as I said, the feature of the army of England, and is often looked upon as merely another form of false shame, and absence of real feeling. But I know no calumny greater against the human race—no very deep thing bears expression easily. Joseph could not make himself known to his brethren till he had gone into an inner chamber, and then he said, 'I am Joseph your brother.' Roses unfold their leaves at midnight, but who ever sees them blow? And as it has been beautifully said, our Blessed LORD Himself died and rose in darkness. Real and deep things shun easy or public expression."

There was a pause in the tent for more than a minute, as the melancholy echoes of Mr. Randall's voice still remained lingering on the ears of his hearers.

Leonard, with his face between his knees, had begun to pull up blades of grass from the turf on which the

twilight still hovered through the opening of the tent. While John Dennis, standing at the aperture with his arms folded, stood gazing out on the distant waste of waters, thinking of the story of Joseph and his brethren, which he had learnt and taught in the Sunday School at home. A very deep "Thank you, sincerely," from Leonard, broke the stillness. "Thank you," repeated he, "you have solved many difficulties in my mind; I have had so many difficulties on that head. I have always been so anxious both about the irresistible desire for reserve in myself, and the fact that the profession to which I am attached, seems to lag behind others in their expression of the fear of God."

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Randall, "there can be no doubt that on an evening so solemn as this, it could not be out of place for any one to be engaged in some distinct preparation for what may so soon take place. Our souls seem on an occasion as this, like a vast troop of spirits crowding round a closed door, having gathered up from every corner of the chamber within. It wants but the signal of the cannon to have that door thrown open for hundreds of those spirits, that press against it, to burst suddenly into the unknown future. In this dark chamber of the body how little we are accurately knowing ourselves! who can tell what we shall see of stain and impurity and guilt, when the flood of everlasting sunlight bursts upon us through the open doorway? When the shell or the bayonet has freed the struggling spirit, the lustful thoughts,—the lustful acts,—the indulged infidelity,—the worldly-mindedness,—the neglected prayers,—the forsaken communion,—

the proud and unforgiving temper, will come crowding in like a troop of ghosts before the open doorway. They will stare and peer upon us, trying to obstruct our gaze of a forgiving God and beckon us with spectral hands to hell."

An oath came from a voice outside the tent. It proceeded from a soldier who was walking with a companion over the grass.

A shudder passed through every one beneath the tent, though no one spoke.

"Let us pray," said Mr. Randall, rising. All rose simultaneously upon the now darkened grass of the approaching midnight.

He paused for some minutes before he began, which they all used doubtless in that self-searching, which his previous questions had suggested to them.

"O Thou, Who in the midnight in the Garden of Gethsemane didst kneel before Thy heavenly FATHER, tasting of the cup of the sufferings of death for every man; O Thou, Who didst discover how bitter were the drops of that cup; O Thou, Who to strengthen our dependence upon God, didst say, 'Not My will but Thine be done;' O Thou, Who wast there wrapped round with the sensitiveness of our frame, and didst foresee the piercing nail, and the thrusting spear of the morrow; O Thou, Whose exceeding bitter cry didst bring an angel to comfort Thee; O Thou, Who wast tempted like as we are, yet without sin; O Thou, Who knowest the thoughts and intents of our hearts in the past and at the present; Who knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are but dust; Be with us

now, lead us in our perils, pardon us in our sins,—bear with us in our infirmities, have compassion on our frailties, on the dreadful battle-field, in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment,—Good LORD, deliver us.” The Amen that sounded from every voice was drawn from the deep well of the heart.

CHAPTER III.

THE SKIRMISH.

ON the morning of the 19th of September, 1854, the long slopes of the Crimea presented a spectacle such as the world has seldom seen before, and towards which the mind’s eye of at least three continents was directed. There was a succession of turfy downs, as we should call them in England, which sprung easily from north to south, and reposed in prolonged layers from west to east. Over the glittering sheen of grass, green with the verdure of an eastern clime, the sunshine of a southern latitude shone without a cloud. From blade to blade here and there the gossamer had woven his glittering armour, and the crickets blew their war trumpets after insects through the grass; and as they sprung from blade to blade tapping their buskined legs against their breasts, it seemed as if the insect world were mimicking man in war and strife.

Across the downs, intersecting them midway to the eye of one who might be standing on the edge of the cliff, ran a cart road, rutted by the waggon of the Tartar

and gladdened in peaceful days by the bright costume of the Crimean women. That road to-day was useless over this summer surface; the highest obstacle which broke its level was the harebell which trembled in the breeze of the hill, or the taller blade of grass which waved in the wind from the sea. Far to the right of one travelling northward lay the clear blue expanse of the Black Sea; heaven, earth, and water seemed to hold a triple dominion, the downs without an obstacle, the sky without a cloud, the sea without a storm. One object broke the vast expanse of the deep, the British fleet with mast and sail, with banner and pennon, the war ships of England and France seemed taking their siesta beneath the morning sun; an awful calmness seemed to hang around them. Such was the scene which would have presented itself to the eye of a traveller wending his way from Eupatoria to Sebastopol. But to that scene one unusual and splendid spectacle was to be added.

On a sudden, like a wide belt stretching for a mile and a half, the armies of England, France, and Turkey occupied with a narrow strip the plain. The sight was gorgeous in the extreme. On the far left the regiments of England were conspicuous for the well-known scarlet of our native land; white and crimson marked the intervening squadrons of the Turk, while the brilliant blue of the French chasseur seemed to melt off the extreme right of the army into the azure of the sea. These colours that formed the groundwork of the advancing lines were relieved by the gleam of the British bayonet, the sable of the helmet of the guards, the glare of the Turkish scimitar, and the steel-mounted cap of

the French Zouave. There was no other colour save the keen black shadow which a morning sun photographed from the soldier to the soil. Sound there was none ; except where along the continuous line the horse champed the bit, or the sword rattled against the spur. Beyond this, you might have heard the measured tread of the advancing infantry, and the movements of Lord Lucan's light cavalry, completing on the extreme left the British lines. In the centre of the English army was the regiment in which Leonard and Dennis advanced ; Sally's husband was in the twenty-third, the widow's son was in the light cavalry.

Eager with expectation the armies of the allies surmounted two or three successive slopes of grass. As yet no sight had struck the eye, no sound the ear ; and ever and anon the British soldier turned to the right where upon his own element floated the fleet, of which he was so justly proud. Upon a sudden, looming against the glowing horizon, a single Cossack appeared ; his small horse and long spear stood out dark against the sunny blue, he paused for half a minute as if appalled at the magnificent spectacle that burst upon his eye, and he was gone.—But it was the signal for the long pent eagerness of the troops to be set free.

The horse artillery rattled over the plain. The light cavalry sprung forward towards the line of the horizon. Now for the battle.

The first time when the sound of cannons was to be connected with aught but play had come to thousands in that advancing line. Intense excitement liberated suspense, and absorbed fear. Every lip, but no heart

trembled. The cavalry were out of sight first. The limbered cannon were soon beyond the edge of the low horizon ; that the single Cossack was but an advanced spy of a host behind him every one knew.

A few minutes more of dreadful wonder, and the roar of artillery had broken the deep stillness of summer's day.

The sight soon burst, as well as the sound, upon the advancing army. A cloud of two thousand Cossacks rested in weighty masses on the opposite slope. Our cavalry were flying at them, spurring the scattered turf with their hoofs ; while many a silken cloud of swans-down curling from the cannon's mouth seemed to rest for an instant in mid air to gaze on the fork of yellow flame that glared along its base, then rolled away to heaven, unwilling to see the work of death of which it was the precursor. The stillness that had attended the advance of the immense line was for a time over,—the yell of the Cossack, the shout of the soldier, the cavernous clang of the hoof of the charger, raised a din of noise. Leonard was slightly in front, his heart beat high with expectation, he advanced eager to see what was passing. The British cavalry was returning. A moan struck his ear, and looking round he noticed, what in his excitement he had not seen before, a riderless horse upon the turf. A round shot had ripped open his belly, and his still smoking bowels heaved palpitating on the turf. The animal's head was stretched out as far as his neck would carry it ; his dilated nostrils gave difficult exit to his expiring breath, and the water that trickled from the bloodshot eye on the chesnut fur

of his cheek might have been called a tear : the rein hung loosely over his mane and rimmed with an ebon bar the grass where the cricket still was chirping.

"Poor beast," thought Leonard, as for an instant absorbed in the sufferings of an animal that had not sinned, he forgot the scene around him. "Poor beast ! What would Maxwell say if he saw you ? And is it so that man carries in the wake of his war trouble to every part of the creation ?" The memory of a passage of Scripture floated to the young officer's mind,— "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together" until the restitution of all things. But his soliloquy was soon broken through ; a private of the light cavalry, borne by two men, was being carried to the rear ; both his legs were off, but they remained in the trowsers which were not yet severed from his person. As he passed Leonard he slightly raised his face, it was pale as coming death could make it ; he looked the young officer in the face, and raising up his hand to his cap waved it in the air and cried, "God bless Old England, Sir," and with that expired.

Leonard gazed with horror and astonishment ; the horse was forgotten. He remained fixed to the spot. His eye followed the corpse which the men still bore, unconscious that its spirit was gone.

"And can it be," thought Leonard, "that that is but a unit of the tens of thousands of agonies I am to see in the next few days ? and is indeed the British courage like that ? If so, what may we not hope ?"

"Lorraine !" said the voice of an officer, riding up to the spot where Leonard was standing. "The work's

begun. It is awful, isn't it? Did you see that poor fellow they were just carrying along? He was horribly wounded."

"Dead!" said Loraine.

"No! was he?" said the other, sinking into a momentary silence. "But see," said he, "our cavalry are retiring." Unable to cope with the superior force of the Cossacks, the body of our horse which had advanced was retreating towards the main line. As the splendid troop of English cavalry swept by a soldier rode up to a cavalry officer, who was rather in advance, and said to him in a low under tone, which nevertheless Leonard was near enough to hear,—

"Sir, the colonel would wish to speak to you in the rear, if you are not too much wounded—his lordship is pleased to commend your gallant bearing." The orderly retired, and on looking up, Leonard noticed that the officer who had been addressed had been wounded in the arm, his face looked very pale, and blood was trickling from his saddle to the turf.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE.

THE night was passed on the ridge of the hill. Early on the following morning all were awake and under arms. Many that night had dreamt of home, and many of battle; many employed themselves in writing

letters to parents, wives, and children, in their native land, under the strong impression that to-morrow might be the last day of life. Many of these letters were marked by that singular presentiment, which afterwards being verified by events, became a sad heirloom of memories in their respective families.

At an early hour, a shout taken up from the extreme right of the British army, roused the attention of Leonard and those around him. A brilliant staff was riding rapidly along the lines, in the centre of which Marshal St. Arnaud was inspecting the British front. A burst of enthusiastic applause attended the arrival of the French Marshal, which seemed to infer how conscious the troops were that those who, from the day of the first Plantagenet down to the moment when the sun of the last Napoleon sunk beneath the French horizon, had been enemies, were now for the first time breast to breast and hand to hand fighting the great battles of liberty against despotism.

The passage of the French general seemed to be the signal for advance. Under another glorious sky, the allied forces moved southward. The slight skirmish of yesterday had with many whetted the appetite for battle, in a few excited those apprehensions so natural to those who had seen the first blood shed. There were yet two or three rising slopes to be surmounted by the army before they came in sight of the object of their expectation. This morning the long line had taken a slightly oblique direction; the French edging the coast, were considerably in advance of the English, whose end of the long line of battle curved slightly to

the northward. Our allies consequently came first in sight of the scene of the coming struggle.

At length, however, that last eminence was reached which brought in view the long desired legions of Russia. The sight was sudden, simultaneous, and magnificent. Before our regiments lay a deep valley, down towards which a sloping green sward inclined from the edge on which the British columns were resting. At the bottom of that slope rose the houses and walls of a picturesque village, which was in the occupation of the Russians. Beyond the village, in a deep current of its own making, rolled the torrent of the Alma, working its way to seaward. On the further bank of the river, which was spanned by a single bridge, were a number of vineyards, purple at this season with the bursting grape. Beyond those vineyards, rose at once and rapidly, a lofty hill, which terminating suddenly left upon its summit a level of some extent. From that level sprung to southward, a second hill, terminating in a table land, beyond which a third time the slope springing southwards gave an impression of imposing height to the mountain on the farther bank of the stream. Such was the ground immediately opposite that spot to which the English army had now suddenly come. Far to the right, the hills assumed an all but precipitous form, as they rapidly descended to the sea ; while on the left, they shelved off in undulations towards the centre of the Crimea.

Upon this mountain side the whole Russian army was drawn up. Lines of infantry covered the slopes, batteries of artillery fringed the edges, cavalry was

drawn up on the level land on the top; while upon the highest summit might be seen the silent battalions of the Russian reserve. On the extreme left, taking the view of those looking from the heights on which the English army were drawn up, clouds of Russian cavalry were waiting to improve a victory, or protect artillery.

Such was the magnificent sight that broke on the eyes of our regiments. The deepest stillness reigned along the valley. The moment our troops appeared, the cannons on the Russian hill, which had been waiting in awful and grim repose, bellowed forth their terrible welcome. The largest of these batteries was an eighteen gun one, which stood opposite the centre of the British force. The next instant the ground before the advancing English division was ploughed up in twenty directions; and round shot either whistled through the lines of our men, or bounding far over their heads, dashed thundering in among the waggons at our rear; the roar of this burst of artillery echoed from crag to crag down the narrow valley, and was immediately taken up by the continual roll of musketry and guns, which marked in the extreme right the ascent of the French Zouaves to the edge of the impending precipice.

"My God," said a voice close to Leonard before the young officer had recovered from the effect of the first announcement of the work of death. He turned round, and saw that a man beside him, who but a minute before had been speaking to him, had been struck by a round shot in the hip, and the severed limb lay quivering on the grass beside the figure of the fallen man.

That brief appeal to his Maker was the first and the last of his dying words, for he was dead already. "The work of death has indeed begun," thought Leonard, "God have mercy on my soul."

At this moment, a shout rent the air ; a body of English skirmishers galloped down the hill ; their object clearly was the village at the bottom, which received their horses with a roll of musketry. Leonard noticed, as the horsemen swept by, young Allen with the troop ; a moment of anxiety ensued ; the village was occupied in a few minutes, and the Russians flying out left its houses in flames. Twice Leonard saw the widow's son burst through the smoke and flame, pursued on each occasion by two or three Russians, whom with the greatest calmness and courage he cut down ; but the signal had been given for Leonard's regiment to advance. A second and third burst of artillery, shells, and shots, and canister, scattering deadly hail around, received the advancing regiment. So awful was the work of carnage at this terrible moment that Leonard's regiment, which we will henceforth call the Cliftons, was compelled to lie down to avoid the terrible scythe which was mowing swathes of human victims ; they were soon up again and advancing ; excitement had already blunted the keener edge of apprehension or fear.

A road of some width between two high stone walls, intersected the bottom of the valley, running down towards the river on either side of this road were different regiments of the British force. The road itself being the centre of the two divisions, became also the centre of the hottest fire. Along this road the regiment

of Leonard had to pass towards the stream ; and in the brief minute that they took to pass along it, the slain and wounded lay in heaps beneath the walls : here lay a man already in the agony of dying, with his face in the dust, clutching with eager fingers the surface of the road on which he lay ; there another with outstretched arms, besought a comrade not to tread on the body of a wounded companion, who but a minute before had been conversing with them on kindred topics ; there lay a soldier that instant dead, having been lifted up by the sudden stroke of the ball, and hurled backwards as by an invisible hand. Yells, shrieks, prayers, and intreaties, rung in awful din round the ears of the advancing regiment.

"This is dreadful work, Mr. Leonard," said the calm, quiet voice of John Dennis, who had drawn near to his young master in the grim scene, but there was scarcely time for the reply. They were now on the bank of the river, and had plunged into the already ruddy tide, which stained with life-blood rolled towards the deep. Leonard plunged in at a point where it was just beyond his depth. Dennis was in a moment by his side, even in that fell hour remembering his affection for his master. The storm of bullets that lashed the foaming waters fell like the hail drops which immediately precede the crash of the loudest thunder ; large bubbles formed on the surface of the stream, rolled past the struggling soldiers in pale red globules, and burst to foam before their eyes.

The scene in the river was one which will never be forgotten by the British army ; never had troops taken

water under such a fire, or attempted to advance under such a wall of artillery ; but they gained the opposite bank, and now came the tug of war.

The Alma was cleared, and the last struggling man of Clifton's regiment had reached the opposite bank ; there was no time for looking back, there was no time for standing still. He that stood still must die,—the thunder-storm of shells, round shot, and canister tore up the ground on every side, and worked into a perfect yeast of foam the torrent that rolled behind them.

We talk of a battle, and we mean by it an event of which we have a definite idea, the united movements of twenty thousand men. The soldier engaged in the fight has very little idea of a battle. The carrion crow may have a notion of it, or the vulture that poises in mid air over the dying ; but those have little idea of it for whom they wait as their twilight meal. The soldier has the notion but of clouds of smoke,—the few that advance on either side of him,—the wounded that groan beneath him, over whose body he strives to step if he can with care,—and sometimes the direction of an officer, if not drowned in the chaos of explosion and confusion. Leonard had the same idea on this memorable morning of the work he was at ; Dennis was close beside him, for Leonard's position in his regiment did not permit of his riding on horseback.

Close before the particular point up which Leonard's regiment was advancing was the famous eighteen gun battery of the Russians, which poured an incessant volley of round shot into the very face of the advancing line. Over and over again Leonard saw but the figure

of Dennis enveloped in clouds of the murkiest smoke ; while every instant the smoke was perforated, as if it were substantial, by the sharp keen passage of the balls. But on they went ; four times already Leonard had been compelled in this dreadful ascent to step over the bodies of men of his own regiment which were stretched in death before his feet.

“ Well done, Mr. Loraine ! ” were the words that had just dropped from the lips of a corporal, on seeing the young Lieutenant press forward with redoubled energy up the steep side, and cheer his men to follow him ; Leonard had only just time to look round to see the corporal stretched upon the earth upon his back, the whole of the back of his head removed by a round shot, and the entire mass of his brains lying by the side of his face, which lay thin and flattened on the turf. Leonard turned from the ghastly sight ; there was no time for fear, no time for horror, on they pressed. The smoke rolled down in their faces in such volleys that he now lost sight of Dennis, when upon a sudden a slight breeze rising the smoke suddenly lifted up like a curtain and displayed close before the advancing regiment within a few inches the lines of the Russian infantry ; the grey coats, the slightly bent shoulders, the clean white trousers, the brilliant brass upon the helmets, the bristling lines of bayonets which almost seemed to touch them left an impression on that awful moment which time never wore away.

Leonard suddenly and for an instant looked round ; the extended line of his regiment was compact and magnificent ; even as he glanced men dropped forward

with their arms stretched out; and as their bayonets rattled on the ground, their elbows bent in and their arms curled upon their bosoms, as struck through their heart or lungs they vomited blood, bleeding on the turf; but the chasms that were made were instantly filled up, though even in that awful moment men tried to avoid treading on the body of a fallen comrade. As far as Leonard could see the scarlet coats of his regiment gleamed in an endless line, he remembered the colonel's white horse, he remembered the grey coats of the enemy close before him, he remembered the yawning battery of eighteen cannons black before their eyes, which had for an instant ceased firing, he remembered the countenance of one Russian, on which as the smoke curled up his eye rested, with a seam that scarred his face from the left eye to the ear, he saw his eye fixed upon himself, he heard the chink of the fire-lock; but at that second the signal was given—"Fire, and charge;" for as yet they had not fired a single volley; he sprang forward as the bullet of the Russian whistled past his ear.

The English fire was terrific. It rung through the air for a few seconds like echoes of thunder in a vault—the men rushed on with a cheer, but they rushed through redoubled clouds of descending smoke. Their feet became instantly entangled in the death throes of the hundreds who had fallen under the volley—outstretched arms hindered for a moment their advance; hands in death grasped their very insteps.

Again the smoke curled up—the whole of that noble Russian line was broken. Grey coats were flying in all

directions; not five men stood together where five hundred a moment before looked impregnable. Before the charge of British soldiers the wall of granite had been broken into crumbling sand.

Leonard was in front of his own line, and as the smoke curled away from before his face, his foot touched the embankment of the eighteen gun battery; he almost gazed into the open black mouth of a huge cannon which was close to his touch—the battery for an instant yearned; at every point the ground seemed to heave and quake; one more terrific glare from the yellow tongues of eighteen guns gleamed along the British line—the next instant the messengers of death rolled from their dark beds and ploughed up the advancing foe, while the reverberating report deafened every ear down to the banks of the bleeding Alma—startling the raven who had couched for a moment on the scathed bough which overhung the barren steppes full a mile from the Alma's banks, and rousing the kite which had been hovering expectant of his evening meal along the cliffs of the far off shore.

Young Loraine was close up to the battery; hardly had the explosion burst from the mouths of the guns, when he was the first to leap into the embankment.

A Russian had already begun to reload, he reeled under the wheel of his gun beneath a blow of Leonard's sword; a second Russian behind him advanced to his place; the young lieutenant, heedless at the moment of all under the excitement of his position, aimed a successful blow at the second Russian—he gasped upon his comrade.

Again for a moment the air was clear.

"Well done, Lieutenant Loraine," said a voice close behind him.

Leonard looked round him, and rising close beside him saw the figure of the colonel. Those words were never to be forgotten.

But they had hardly been uttered when another volley from the English lines ploughed the air—the rattle of wheels followed in a moment and when the smoke had been cleared away, the guns had been limbered up, and the Russians were in full retreat.

But the English regiments in the division in which Leonard marched, though occupying the glorious position we have just described, had in their advance placed themselves under the fire of several columns of Russian infantry on their flank; and further lines advancing in their front, a murderous volley was opened upon them—they struggled to advance, again the bayonets of the Muscovite bristled in their faces, and again their ranks were decimated by the overpowering storm of shot.

For a moment they stood still—they swerved—they began to retire, and in that fleeting minute between three and four hundred men dropped dead or dying at the feet of their comrades.

Here Chester fell. And here the officers of the regiments shared the same bloody bed with their poorer brothers in warfare.

Loraine, who had never flinched, and was striking steadily at two Russians that were advancing upon him, was by the side of a captain of his own regiment, who had just himself again uttered that sentence so charm-

ing to Leonard's ear, "Well done, Loraine," when a bullet entering his open mouth, struck him in the back of his throat, and he rolled gasping at Leonard's feet.

In the confusion of that memorable minute, a cry assailed the ears of young Loraine, it burst from a youth of his own regiment who could hardly be called more than a boy, and who, having been wounded in the leg, was unable to retreat with the men, and one of the enemy was rushing upon him to bayonet him upon the ground. Impelled by a humanity as high as his courage, Loraine rushed forward, and striking down the Russian saved the boy; but in that instant a bullet fired directly at him, struck him in the shoulder, and he dropped to the earth. Dennis saw him fall, but there was no time for thought or rescue. In that never to be forgotten minute six hundred British soldiers had fallen dead.

The Russians were closing in upon them in countless multitudes on every side—all seemed lost—another moment and they must positively have been cut to pieces, when a tremendous shout rent the air behind them, and Dennis looked round; the Guards were coming—their high black beavers fringed the air. Their lines extended right and left beyond the reach of the eye—their front was without a breach, and their bayonets glared in the sun. George, Duke of Cambridge, grandson of George III., led them on, their discipline was perfect, their advance terrible. For an instant they broke in two, a wide space yawned in the centre of the Fusiliers, it was to receive the shattered

regiments of the light division—the 23rd and the remains of Leonard's regiment fell back in perfect order through the opening which their gallant comrades made for them.—At that instant Dennis fixed his eye on the spot where his noble-minded master lay bleeding on the ground ; but it was too late, the light division had passed through ; they had already begun to reform in the rear, and the chasm had filled in. The Guards presented an unbroken advancing line to the eyes of the gathered infantry of Russia ; marked by the scarlet of their coats, the ebon blackness of their beavers, and the glancing steel of their bayonets.

There have been certain single movements in the battles of the world, which have been as clearly marked on the history of mankind as pillars that stand up on plains, or solitary rocks that start up out at sea ; and yet to men concerned in these movements, the event itself seemed no more than ordinary, and the hazard and peril not more than usually imminent. The period of the crisis may have been five minutes ; nevertheless, it may have occupied more attention and room on the page of history than a whole campaign, or a war of thirty years. Such was the few minutes' unflinching stand, which Leonidas and his three hundred made at Thermopylæ—such the last charge into the wood of Malplaquet—such the celebrated charge of the Guards at Waterloo—such the advance of the Fusiliers at Alma.

To one who could have gazed down with bird's eye view on the scene of conflict, it must have been indeed magnificent. The centre of such a glance would be that long black and scarlet line of the British Guards,

which possessing the smooth compactness of an interminable osier wand, like that wand waved backwards and forwards in its extremities. Behind them was the steep and sometimes precipitous descent of the mountain side, which while it presented a pavement, as it were, tessellated with the figures of the dead and dying, was, nevertheless, the scene over which line upon line of advancing regiments were struggling up the heights. Such an eye might have observed close behind the Fusilier Guards the officers of the 7th starting in front of their men sword in hand waving them on with cheers of victory. Behind these, belting the face of the down, came the 95th and 33rd; while down at the bottom of the declivity, beginning to tread in the track of the pathway of glory and death, still dripping with the drops of the Alma through which they had just now struggled, with shout and cheer, which drowned the cry of the wounded and dying, on came the 19th and 47th. Far to the right, filling up the chasm between the English and the Turks, the 55th and 30th were advancing into position. Behind these, the still tumultuous Alma roared along its war song to the deep; by the shore of which, Lord Raglan and his Staff were riding to gain as distinct a view of the battle as smoke and tumult could permit. Beyond the stream the still advancing lines and columns of British regiments were struggling through vineyards, from whose purple clusters many a thirsty soldier drunk his last life-draught; while others were gazing up the opposite hill, which still shone gloriously in the cloudless sunshine, and presented the magnificent spectacle which we have just described.

Further still, in the rear of the north bank of the Alma, on many a tree or branching brushwood, the carrion crow awaited in lonely solitude, unstirred by the roar of artillery, the grim repast of the coming night; or lazily turned his head as he heard the scream of the sea vulture, which perched on the barren cliffs which overhung the Euxine, stretched out its featherless neck, and screamed towards the scene of carnage, as if summoning all its kind to their awful meal. "The vulture mounteth up and maketh her nest on high; she dwelleth and abideth on the rock upon the crag of the rock; from thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off; her young ones suck up blood, and where the slain are there is she."

Beyond the charge of the Guards could be seen the mountain top crowned with the still unbroken lines of Russia, the masses of heavy cavalry, and the clouds of the Cossacks: while, as if to light up the gorgeous scene, as water lights up the expanse of distance, the unclouded noon-day sun shot fiery beams from bayonet point and glancing sword. Nor would it be right in such a survey of the battle field, in the height of its carnage, to pass by those noble coadjutors of the human race in their scenes of peril—the horses of war, as,—their flanks reeking and shining with sweat,—their sides spangled with the froth of their champed bit,—their mouths foaming with blood,—they strained up the side of the hill, bearing their gallant riders to victory or to death. Here riderless, with stirrups clanking beneath their belly, scared and terrified they took awful leaps or replunged into the stream; or there scattered far and

wide on hill and plain the honest brutes puffed out their leathern hides in dying groans without complaint, in sympathy with the officer who breathed his last with his head reclined on the neck of the gallant beast which had borne him through so many a day of life. "The glory of his nostril is terrible; he paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth back at the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

Such was the bird's-eye view of the battle.

The grey lines of Russia for a moment stared on the Fusiliers, as a wall of stones erected by the hands of man in the hour of expected tempest, may stand, as it were, gazing on the huge billow which far off at sea tosses its lofty head on high. Another, and yet another moment, and the advancing wave has dashed on the shore, hurling its impetuous head against the long grey wall. For an instant, the mass of waters hides the object of their wrathful attack. Another moment, and those waters in angry and murmuring tumult have returned to their mighty home; but the wall, shivered to a thousand fragments, is gone—save where here and there some mass of stones or rock heavier than the rest withstood the fury of the sea, and rear their shorn and isolated heads as if expectant of the next attack.

So the grey lines of Russia stood a moment gazing on the high head of that advancing wave as it swelled and rolled along the sea of battle; they watched the black beaver, and they heard the shout of the approach; another moment, and the advancing tide has hurled its impetuous fury on the line, and when smoke and dust had, in another minute subsided, yawning with a thousand gaps, the grey wall of Russia stood a shivered wreck—save here and there, where around some hero a few grey coated warriors still struggled to preserve their footing; or entangled amidst the heaps of slain, others were unable to retreat. They fled.

And at this moment the two regiments which had been hitherto treading in the footsteps of the guards, fell in the same line with them, and forming to almost a boundless extent, retook the battery, and charged on the vantage ground which they had taken. The Russians were driven back with a terrible slaughter. Codrington's light division, Pennyfather's second division of the guards formed line on the ground they had won.

At this moment the head of a column of two hundred Russians were seen moving over the still unattained ridge of the hill, and began to descend on the advancing line. From the bottom of the hill Lord Raglan saw the new danger, and ordering some guns to be immediately brought up to play upon them, firing over the heads of our own men made rapid lanes in the front of the new Russian columns. Another minute, and the enemy melted away behind the edge of the mountain. So rapid and soft was their dispersion, that their departure seemed more like the vanishing

of figures in a dream, or the thawing of snow figures beneath the sudden heat of the sun. Enough, they had fled; and the victory may at that moment be declared to have been won.

On the right of the Guards, loud cheers were now heard of a somewhat unwonted nature to British ears; having crawled or sprung like lynxes from the crags, the French regiments of Algiers, having gazed into the secrets of the sea-gull's nest, and startled the silent vulture from his lone dominion, had formed a line on the edge of a precipice. The Russians on all sides gave way, and the advancing French had now come up on the flank of the victorious English, while on the extreme left of our lines, the brigade of Highlanders directly in front of an enormous battery of seven guns, closed in like an opposite wing to the French. The carnage was horrible: the Russian columns recoiling from the charge of the Zouaves, only turned to meet death upon the British bayonet. For five minutes the noise of battle changed its peculiar sound, and instead of the roar of musketry or the voices of men, the sound that struck on the ear was the splash of blood. On the only side now open to them,—on the south-east of their position the Russians precipitately retreated; while two troops of horse artillery, which had plunged across the Alma, galloping up the hill, played with such terrible effect on the tumultuous rear of the retreating army, that they fell as if mown down by a sickle.

By three o'clock on the ever memorable 20th of September, on the crown of that proud hill—proud in the annals of British warfare,—Lord Raglan and his

staff met the victorious generals of France and England, and with the Guards and Highlanders around him, the river rolling beneath him, the hill-side covered with the mantle of the dead, the receding guns and columns of Russia roaring in fainter and fainter echoes towards the south-east, the victory of Alma was won and proclaimed !

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT AFTER THE BATTLE—THE DEAD.

DURING the hours of that brief afternoon that succeeded the battle, the intense excitement which had not yet subsided, so occupied the minds of the English army, that the condition of the wounded, the dying and the dead, who lay scattered and chilling beneath the rising stars, was forgotten in the attention paid to the retreating Russians, and the prisoners ; the field that had been won, and the march that was to follow.

The soldier was resting for a moment after the anguish of those memorable three hours on the sepulchral turf or the wheel of the gun. His brain and his mind whirled in such a chaos of confusion that he was no more thinking of the multitudes of dead that lay beneath his touch, than we, when in deep conversation we pass a churchyard, think of the dusty occupant of the lowly grave. The still continued ring of the noise of the battle-field deafening the ear, the occasional discharge of the gun in pursuit of the Russians, or the

solitary ball that boomed through the air from the side of some vessel of our fleet, continued to keep up the impression that the battle had hardly yet ceased.

But there was to come a reaction, and that an awful one. We may forget the dusty occupants of the lowly grave; we cannot forget the moaning claimant for water in the thirst of dying, or the face which stares grimly up into the night sky, of one who is now a corpse, and was yesterday a soldier. Impelled by feelings of this kind in an early hour of the advancing night, when sunset had given place to stars, and the heat and the sulphurous smell of the powder had melted away before the dewy damp of the Crimean evening, small companies fraying themselves off the main body of the victorious army, set out in search of some friend or relative, whom they had either seen falling beneath the fire, or in vain had sought for among the ranks of the living.

The honest Dennis had marked exactly the place where Leonard had fallen, and taking a lantern, the poor boy, careless of all thoughts of rest, set out on his work of love and mercy. He had not gone far before a similar lantern approaching him showed he was not alone in the task he had undertaken. Ere he had gone many steps, in all directions along the sides of the hill and the ravines below wandering amid the mazes of the dead and dying, small pale rays indicated companies of searchers, hovering here and there over the grim chamber of death in the open air, like souls which still lingered near the bodies which had been so long their home; loath, though compelled, to take their flight

to eternity. To the great joy of Dennis he found the lantern that was approaching him was borne by Mr. Randall.

"Well, my good fellow," said the voice of the Clergyman, "you are on the same errand that I am, I suppose, in search of the dying or the dead?"

"I am going in search of young Mr. Loraine," said Dennis, hardly keeping down the choking tears.

"Indeed," said Mr. Randall with unfeigned surprise. "And has he fallen?"

"He fell, sir," said Dennis, "just before the great charge of the Guards, and I marked the spot, I think I shall find it."

"I will gladly help you," said Mr. Randall. And they two went on together. As John Dennis said afterwards, "He could not help thinking as he walked along of what he used to read in the Sunday school at home, about the three women that set out at night to the tomb of JESUS. And what a blessed thing it would be if that same JESUS could be seen walking about among the dying and the dead, saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'"

They had not gone far, before they had to pass three or four dead bodies lying on the ground of Dennis's own regiment. In one place a wounded Russian had made a pillow of the corpse of a British soldier,—his breast had been pierced with a bayonet, and both his legs were broken. A little beyond them, lay three men of the 28rd, one with his hands under his head, and his unclosed eyes staring with stone-like steadiness towards the stars, and his teeth clenched in the rigidity

of death. Another lay beside him, with his face buried in the dust, and his arms bent in underneath his breast; while upon his back reclined the head of a wounded soldier, whose voice had dropped into the dull monotonous sound of "Water! water!" That was the one cry of that awful chamber of death; it sounded first along the silent ridge of the mountain; it was taken up where far away the bleeding Alma rolled; it was responded to from the bush and the ravine in one long monotony, "Water! water!" Oh! at that moment, for the Cross of Calvary to be erected on that lone hill side, for those pale sufferers to hear the words "I thirst," from Him "Who took our nature upon Him," and "was not ashamed to call us brethren."

But never mind, "He can hear them in heaven His dwelling-place, and when He hears forgive."

They had not proceeded many steps farther, before they saw a soldier labouring hard at a grave, which he seemed intent on digging himself, on the hill-side. He had thrown up already many shovels of earth and stones, and as he went mechanically on with his work, he seemed like one who recognized burial of the dead as one of the holy offices consecrated by human affection. As our friends approached him, and for a moment lingered near the spot attracted by the man's manner, he turned quickly to them, and said:

"Would you be kind enough to help me with this body, I don't think I can lift it myself." He paused for a moment, and then added, "though time was when I lifted him easy enough; he has sat upon my knees, and lain asleep in my arms by my own fireside

and cottage door. He was as good a boy, gentlemen, as ever lived, him who lies there; and his poor mother will take on sadly when she hears about his death, but God's will be done. He never went against our will, that I remember; and when he enlisted and followed me to the wars, it was with as good a heart as boy ever bore to his father. But, gentlemen, where's the use of fretting? as they say; I saw him fall in the awful charge of the Guards yesterday, and though I say it, I am sure there wasn't a lad in the British lines that did his duty better. I thank God for it, for I was close by him when he fell; though he didn't live a minute, he had time to take my hand, and say, 'Good bye, father, and God bless you,—give my love to mother, and don't fret, and don't forget little Mary, and tell her I thought of her, and God bless you all, for I can't say no more,' and with these words, gentlemen, my poor boy died."

And the soldier wiped a tear from his cheek as he spoke, and threw up another shovel of dirt, while they turned and looked on the body of the boy, who lay outstretched and stiff in the calm starlight. Mr. Randall and Dennis looked at him in silence. He was a good-looking youth; his father laid his body with his hands on his bosom; he had been shot three times through his breast; there was a smile round his lips, which gave a pleasing impression; they say that all gun-shot wounds do this.

Mr. Randall and his companion did not like to break the stillness, or to interrupt the man as he went on digging his grave, and yet they wanted much to be on their journey. Mr. Randall said in a low voice, "Do you remember what the angel says to Tobit, 'when

thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee.' It is a blessed work this burying of the dead, and no doubt brings a blessing from God."

"I'm afraid I'm keeping you, gentlemen," said the soldier. "I think the grave is deep enough now, though his mother would have said, Don't let him be buried shorter than a four foot grave,—but we can't think of such things on the battle-field," said he with a smile, "four inches are enough here, and if the carrion crow has them up after our armies are gone away, it doesn't matter much, gentlemen; it doesn't hurt the soul." So saying, he threw his spade down, and going up to his boy, he took him round the shoulders. His face fell heavily forward on his bosom, as a dead man's will; the clergyman saw it grieved his father, "for," as he said, "he had taken such pains to lay him out well, which he knew his good woman thought so much of, when her second boy Joe died of a decline."

Mr. Randall and Dennis immediately took up the other parts of the corpse, and together they bore him to his burial, and as they laid him in the ground, Mr. Randall said the words of the Burial Service, which sounded strangely beautiful in the midst of that wild scene,—

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live: he cometh up, and is cut down like a flower, he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour but of Thee, O LORD, Who for our sins art justly displeased? Yet, O LORD GOD Most Holy, O LORD Most Mighty, O Holy and Most Merciful SAVIOUR, deliver us not into

the bitter pains of eternal death, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee."

By the time he had finished these words, the body lay in its hill-side sepulchre. Deeply impressive are those words ever uttered in the open air, but peculiarly so to-night. The father continued gazing down on the face of his boy, unwilling to throw the clod upon features so mixed up with his cottage home and his fireside. The sound of Mr. Randall's voice died away upon the evening air amid a stillness which was only broken by two other sounds; the continued moan of the dying which rose from every side; and once by a scream from the carrion eagle, which having smelt the dead from the crag on the sea shore, uttered its lonely note like a clarion for battle, and spread its strong wings, to soar towards its grim repast.

The following letter afterwards written by the father home, will a little show the temper of our English soldiery. For the roughest soldier can realise the tenderest emotion when severed from his home.

"DEAREST MARY,

"I hope this will find you well, as it leaves me at present, thank God for it. Our Tom and I got quite safe to the seat of war, he bore up bravely through all his troubles, it made my old heart proud to hear how many called him a fine lad.—Dear wife, he's been a good boy to me, and looked well after me. We've had a dreadful battle on the heights of the Alma. Our men fought like lions, and so did our Tom. Whenever I could take my eyes off the Russians, I couldn't but look at him, and think what the fine people in our

parish would say to him. Well, dear wife, Tom's dead. But don't fret, he died like a British soldier should. We were charging up the hill, and I hadn't time to look round more than a minute, and I heard him cry, 'Oh, father!' Those rascally Russians shot him with three bullets through his breast. I was able to watch the place where he fell, and, thank God, found his body before any of those fellows had time to strip him. I've been burying the poor boy to-night, though it's enough to break a heart of stone to put his face under the ground. But I put a lock of little Jane's hair in his hand, which she gave him; and I left it there, that he might not be altogether without something that belonged to him like on the cold dull hill here."

Such was a portion of the letter which the good man wrote; a type of how many letters of woe and sorrow even at this moment wending their way like birds of evil omen! each one to be lost in the crowd of sorrowers, and to win no tributary tear of national regret.

Mr. Randall and Dennis wended their way along the earlier slopes of the hill, deeply saddened by the reflection of the impossibility of stopping to tend the crowds of sufferers that thronged this Pool of Bethesda. Each one was lying within sound of the rolling Alma, and lingering like the impotent folk of old, for some one to move them to the waters. Bright indeed would be the messenger who would come to that water and give them its healing draught; for on the Crimean hill that night there "lay a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, withered," waiting, but how vainly! to be borne to the stream.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOUNDED.

THOUGH for hundreds there no angel comes to stir the Alma—though for hundreds there no kindly hand will come to lift the wounded to the longed for stream, yet there is One Whose silent footfall treads amid the five porches crowded with the wounded, Whose Bosom yearns to comfort and give rest, and Who whispers into each ear that will listen to it, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and if they will but answer "yes," He will tell them that ere to-morrow morning they shall rise and take up their bed and walk. Rise above this corruptible body into the regions where sorrow is known no more, for "He shall change this vile body that they may put on a glorious body."—"Verily I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

"It was somewhere near here," said Dennis, letting down the ray of his light to bring its focus on the bodies of the soldiers.

"It was here that the guards charged just at the time the chasm was made through which we retreated. You may depend upon it, it is not far from here," said Dennis, keeping his face down on the ground, "for he was badly wounded."

At that moment a low moan struck upon their ears, and looking round, they saw propped against a large stone or fragment of a rock, the head of a boy; his face had assumed the most ashy paleness. Cold sweat drops stood upon his forehead, and round his eyes was

that dark rim which we so often notice in the face of the dying, like as when the deep shadows of the clouds gather in round the evening sun. One hand was on his breast, and the other lay maimed and shattered by his side. The sound of footsteps seemed to arouse him, and he began to talk, and yet in such a strain as to show that his mind was wandering.

"Mother! dear mother!" he said, "why don't you come closer to me? I see you out there, but I can't reach you. I want to rest my tired head upon your breast. Do come to your poor boy as you used to do! for I'm so cold in this bed, and the rushlight circles are so many that they look like stars on a great wide sky."

He turned his heavy eye towards Mr. Randall, who approached him, and stared at him fixedly.

"My God!" said the Clergyman, as he dropped on his knee by the boy. What strong emotion worked in his bosom there was none there to know or to ask, but there was something in the emphasis with which he spoke that made Dennis look up.

The presence of the two figures seemed to recall his fleeting sense.

"Oh," said he, "forgive me, I didn't know where I was. Hasn't he come back with the water? I'm so thirsty."

"Who?" said Mr. Randall, with a voice of the utmost tenderness.

"Why that kind officer," said he, "who has gone down to fetch me some in his hat, as he said he would, from the river. And yet he's so badly wounded him-

self, I'm half afraid he's dead without getting back to me."

"Who was he?" said Dennis quickly—the idea struck him it might be Leonard. But the youth's mind had gone again, and he fancied he was in his mother's room.

Dennis remembered that he had seen Leonard start forward to save a boy just of this description when he received his gunshot wound. Possessed of this idea, Dennis shot off in the direction of the stream, down the sloping sides of the mountain. He had not gone far before he discovered a figure crawling rather than aught else, keeping one hand up, between which and his teeth he was holding up a cap full of what was, oh how precious then,—water.

It was Leonard—and the noble minded fellow had with all his agony struggled down to the stream and back again; faint with loss of blood, he found it difficult to walk.

The scene which he afterwards described he had seen by the water's side baffled all description. In one case, a man with neither hand or legs literally had managed to crawl to the edge, and all along as far as the eye could reach, poor wretches on their breasts were hanging their thirsty lips over the rushing wave, and yelled and laughed again with mad delight as the cold stream washed their withered tongues—Leonard but paused to take one deep draught himself, and then returned on his work of mercy. Exhausted and nearly sinking with the weakness he suffered, he heard with delight the kindly tones of Dennis's voice by his side.

Oh with what consolation in scenes like that do well known tones return to the ear ; how hallowed to us then are voices and faces which in the ordinary life of home had no charm for us, and perhaps created an aversion !

With the aid of Dennis, Leonard returned to the spot where leaning against the stone the youth still lay, and Mr. Randall was kneeling by his side. The Clergyman seemed absorbed in unusual interest in the dying boy : and as Leonard and Dennis returned to the spot, the solemn tones of his voice in prayer fell upon their ears. From the extreme youth and apparent beauty of the wounded boy, he appeared to be one of those untoward victims whom death so often first selects for his awful harvest.

Mr. Randall's eye was fixed earnestly on the face as if he longed for some look of recognition,—but none came. The soul which was in prison within that broken cage gazed through the upturned and fixed eye on scenes apparently different from those which occupied Mr. Randall's attention.

"It's the poor fellow," said Leonard, who aided by Dennis had just reached the spot, "whom I saw struck down in that terrible charge of ours, and rescued from being killed——"

"By being struck down yourself, sir," said Dennis, looking at his master with an expression of inexpressible regard.

"Never mind that," said Leonard, "I wasn't going to dwell upon that point, but upon another—I lay for some time, I can't say how long, insensible after the charge of the Guards, and how I escaped from being

crushed to death God alone and His mercy can tell. When I came to myself it was dull twilight, and I was first conscious of a burning thirst, and an intense cold in my wound; but on looking round I saw the ground covered with the dying, and seeing this poor fellow whose life I had tried to save by me, I determined to finish the work I had begun; I dragged him to this stone, in order, by his own request, to get something to prop up his head. After I had done this, he told me he wished to say something before he died, and he then told me one of the most extraordinary stories I ever heard. I will tell it you to-morrow, if, please God, I live, but now we must attend to his wants.

"Raymond," said Leonard, speaking to the youth, "here's water."

"Gracious God!" were the words which fell from Mr. Randall's lips. They both of them looked toward him, who was, with a pale face, still kneeling by the side of the youth.

"Gracious God! by what name did you call him?" said he, addressing Leonard.

"I call him by the name of Raymond, the name which he gave himself in the extraordinary story he told."

Mr. Randall dropped his hands, which he clasped, and approaching close to the ear of the youth, said in a low suppressed tone of voice—"Raymond, here's water!"

If a wand electric with the spark of life had touched the expiring soldier, he could not have started more suddenly from the stone. The blood gushed from his

heart by the movement, mantled crimson over the pale cheek of approaching decay, and poured forth a fresh red volume from the dried lips of the wound. He stared wildly round and said, "Who called me? What voice was that which spoke?"

Mr. Randall placed his finger on the lip of the sufferer, and said, "Hush, Raymond, here is water." The boy took the proffered draught, and drunk it eagerly in through his dried lips, and in that moment his dull eye had wandered off Mr. Randall, and stared around the hill of dying.

The colour that had so suddenly assumed the place upon his face faded off rapidly as sunbeams on the snowy height, and in a few seconds, the cold pale hues of the grim monarch usurped their dominion there.

He sunk back again on the stone; but Mr. Randall's eye was never, for an instant, taken off his face. He again dropped his voice into the singular low tone in which he had at first addressed him, and began to say the LORD's Prayer.

The effect was again the same; the lips of the young soldier moved; he followed and repeated the words as a child at his mother's knee, or one who dying fresh from school chimes in at once in the old monotony.

As Mr. Randall finished, another voice, a few inches from them joined in, and with earnest accents repeated the doxology. A deep groan followed the Amen.

"Watch him," said Mr. Randall, "and I will go and see if there be some other case of sorrow which I may relieve."

A private soldier, frightfully wounded, lay with his

head pillowed on the back of his dead comrade, whose face was literally buried in the ground. As Mr. Randall approached him, his eye fell on another figure apparently in the attitude of prayer. Both the arms extended towards heaven, and the fingers were clenched as if in intense earnestness. The head was a little inclined forwards, as if the eye followed the direction of the hands in pointing to our heavenly FATHER. What was Mr. Randall's horror when he came to him? He found him a corpse. The attitude had frozen upon him, as if some sudden frost had come over his attitude and fixed it indelibly as it found it; on a further look it seemed to proceed from that terrible accompaniment of the battle field—lock jaw.

The clergyman turned from the ghastly sight.

"What do you want, my poor fellow?" said he, as he approached the soldier.

"Nothing you can give me," said the man. "I want hope, and that I never can have."

"Say not so," said Mr. Randall earnestly. "We need never cease to hope."

"I was an open blasphemer up till last night," said the soldier. "It would be madness in me to hope; when I have drunk almost the last dreg drop of the cup of life for myself, shall I give God the scanty remainder? No; He'll laugh at me." There was a superior tone about his way of speaking.

"Repent, and Jesus waits to pardon; He will receive to the uttermost all who will come to Him," said the clergyman. He was answered by a loud burst of derisive laughter.

"Pray hear me," said Mr. Randall. "Why do you doubt the possibility of returning now?"

"Because—because—" said the dying man, "there's no time to show a sign of repentance, and I remember, in my old days of school, how we were taught that penitence must go before pardon. In my case, this is impossible, for I feel death is creeping upon me, and where is the time to bring forth fruit from this barren stock?" and the man turned and looked upon the reasoner.

"Stop," said Mr. Randall, "you seem to recollect the old teaching of your school days. There were only two people whom our Blessed SAVIOUR declared forgiven, and one of them began his penitence an hour before he died, and the other performed the act of her penitential love a minute before He said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

"You mean the thief on the cross," said the man, seemingly anxious to show his memory of the knowledge of Scripture.

"The thief on the cross," said Mr. Randall, "was arrested in the midst of his wicked course by the wound which caused his death, the same thing has happened to you. Our SAVIOUR hung on the next cross to him, and He stands at this moment looking at you with the glance of the wandering Shepherd, which around the pathways of this wilderness is seeking out the sheep that are lost, and He will go after them until," said Mr. Randall.

"He find them," finished the voice of the dying soldier, and a smile suffused his face.

"Yes," said Mr. Randall, "and more than that, God never gives a man the block with which to carve his statue without laying his chisel and hammer by his side—the opportunities of penitence are ever close at hand.—Stop!" said Mr. Randall, as if suddenly struck by a thought of his own, "Remember this, With God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. It is not the *length* of our brief span of three-score years and ten that God cares for, for that a thousand times told is but a grain on the boundless beach, or a drop of the unfathomed deep compared with His eternity. The young innocent that bled beneath the sword of Herod a year and nine months old, and Enoch with his three hundred and sixty and five years lying like snow drifts on his head, who so walked with God that he was not, and God took him, are both alike in Heaven. Mary Magdalene with the alabaster box and a few weeks' penitence heard alike the voice, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' as S. John the Evangelist when being ninety-three years old he bowed his head on his pillow and died. It is not the time, it is the will that God looks to, and the real sincere penitence of three hours will be accepted by Him 'Who does not wish the death of a sinner' as the life of years."

The poor fellow had by this time fixed his gaze on the Clergyman's face, as if attracted by the words he spoke, so as to forget alike his anguish of body and anguish of mind.

"But," said he, "what chance have I of showing my fruit of repentance?"

“The thief had his,” said Mr. Randall, “and every one has their chance. His opportunity was patiently-borne suffering, the full confession of his faith in CHRIST as GOD in a moment when His Divinity was most veiled in a suffering Manhood, and what is most striking in his case, the will to acknowledge his own guilt in the presence of his comrade, and the scoffers of GOD who stood beneath the cross, when if there be one satisfaction to a malefactor above another, it is ‘to die game.’ We must judge men according to their temptation, and the resistance of that temptation would be a severe test of many a murderer and a robber. He sacrificed and threw away the labour and fruits of his wicked life by acknowledging in his last hour it had all been in vain. The love of posthumous fame may exist even on the scaffold, and the regard of a gang of thieves after a man is dead may be as much cared for by the malefactor, as the honour of posterity is by the hero. Such was his alabaster box he offered as his penitence to CHRIST, and he added to it the rebuke of his comrade in guilt, showing not only the desire to repent himself, but to perform restitution to those whom his example may have injured. The acts of his life and death are contained in these few words,” said Mr. Randall taking out his Bible, and in the midst of the silence of the scene to which Leonard and Dennis had become listeners, read the acts of the thief on the cross.—“The other answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man has done nothing

amiss.' And he said unto JESUS, 'LORD, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' And JESUS said unto him, 'Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' And there was darkness over all the earth."

Mr. Randall ceased, and more than one mind was doubtless struck by the similarity of some of the circumstances, surrounded as they were with the darkness of the Crimean hill.

"There," said Mr. Randall, "is the whole of his case, his penitence, his confession, his prayer, his absolution. The embodiment of his faith in confessing CHRIST, of his hope in looking forward to Paradise, of his charity in yearning for the penitence of his brother thief. Though in a bough of an aged, and leafless, and withered tree, the slender stream of sap was producing its one little manifestation of life, yet from that one bough dropped the full bursting fruits of Faith, Hope, and Charity."

"Oh, say that again!" said the voice of the man, who stretched his hand and seized Mr. Randall's arm, "they sound like the words I used to hear in days gone by at home, but I have so entirely departed from the path of goodness that I used to know, that I fear my case is hopeless."

His fast failing breath, and sinking cheek showed his time to be short, and that what was to be done ought to be done quickly.

"You must trust me," said Mr. Randall, "in this solemn moment there is no time to lose. He will accept anything, the parting with which will be equivalent to

the yielding entirely of your own will into His hands. Think, I conjure you, think, and that with earnest prayer to God to aid you, of what there may be which you can sacrifice to Him as a sign of your contrition in this dark and solemn moment. Think over the past and see what confession, what restitution, what act of reparation may yet be offered by you as a token that you sincerely desire to die in penitence to God, and charity to man."

"There is one thing," said the dying soldier tightening his grasp of the Clergyman's wrist, "there is one thing. But ——" and his eyes wandered around on the figures that loomed in the darkness.

At a word from Mr. Randall Leonard and Dennis disappeared, and the Minister was left alone with the dying.

"One awful secret," said the man, "I have carried with me through the last ten years, but its revelation will bring lasting discredit on my own name, and perhaps ruin upon others."

"Speak it, I conjure you," said Mr. Randall, "in the Name of Him Who will forgive all if only we will humble ourselves before Him."

"Pray for me," said the penitent, "that I may have grace to perform the difficult task, and be sincere."

Mr. Randall prayed. And through a long and still half hour a revelation was made by the soldier of so awful and overwhelming a nature as to affect materially the future fate of some of those mixed up in our present tale. After-circumstances compel the substance of that confession to be brought to light, and as far as

those circumstances were made known, their mention in the following chapter does not break the secrecy of the dying statement.

The silence was broken on the ears of Leonard and Dennis and the poor youth whom they were attending, by the voice of Mr. Randall in an agitated tone, as if he had received information which had shaken him to his heart's centre, saying, "Unto God's gracious mercy and protection I commit thee. The LORD bless thee and give thee peace now and for evermore!"

All was soundless, for mortal ear does not hear the passage of the soul as she fleets into eternity.

"God rest his soul," said Mr. Randall, as he returned to his companions. "It has been an awful scene, alike for him and for me. It will be long indeed," continued he with a sigh, "before I forget the wounded on this hill side."

Impressed very deeply by the scene, Leonard and Dennis continued to gaze on the countenance of the clergyman.

"Do you think, sir," said Dennis, "that he will go to heaven?"

"God grant it," said the other, "but he has had a dreadful tale to tell, and no common score to be forgiven, but I know that God is no austere master, and desires our salvation, without which who indeed could be saved? I believe the poor fellow was really penitent. Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of His heritage; He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy; He will turn again; He will have

compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

"Wonderful words," said Leonard, "where do they come from?"

"The Bible," said Mr. Randall, "which reveals God as indeed a pardoning and a long-suffering FATHER. But we must be thinking of our poor wounded sufferer on the stone yonder. We shall never be able to carry him ourselves with you, Leonard, ill as you are, for your wound seems bleeding afresh. I see numbers of small lanterns and torches flitting over the hill, if you were to go, Dennis, yonder, towards the east side, I think you might get some one to help us to carry this poor fellow to the camp."

"That I will," said Dennis, "just tell me where to go to, and I will not lose a moment."

Difficulties bring out character. How had Dennis come out since he left little Jane at his mother's door!

He went rapidly across the turf in the direction Mr. Randall pointed him, finding it no easy matter to thread his way amid the heaps of dying. Once he stumbled over the body of a man which lay flat upon the ground, and before he had extricated his foot from the arm in which it had caught, the figure suddenly leant up upon its elbow. It was that of a Russian, the ghastly paleness of his features struck a peculiar horror into the breast of Dennis. He could not for the instant take his eye off the glaring eye-balls of the wounded foe; he noticed the blood was flowing from a wound in his arm which had been re-opened by the jerk of his motion. Dennis, with his compassionate honest heart,

taking his own handkerchief off, bound up the Russian's arm. The Russian looked at him with a peculiar expression as he was doing it, which the English boy interpreted into gratitude.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COSSACKS.

As soon as he had done it he started off again on his errand for his comrade. He had scarcely turned when a bullet whizzed by his ear, and on moving round his head, startled by the sound, he saw to his horror the Russian, whose wound he had been dressing, with his firelock in his hand, which he had just fired, and the smoke scarcely curling off on the dewy air. The wretch had tried to destroy his benefactor; a grim and ghastly smile played round his lips, his eyes glared for a moment upon Dennis with a fiendish expression as he sunk back again upon the turf. The exertion burst a blood vessel, whose purple torrent poured through the gaping lips of his wound. With an echoing yell he died as Dennis stood looking, but not before he had twice torn up with his clenched fingers the grass and dust.

Dennis turned away in horror and pursued his course. The night was dark, and the starlight had become obscured by heavy clouds. Dennis, ignorant of his way, which was bounded by no intelligible mark, save the roaring of the Alma at the foot of the hill, had soon wandered away from the right track, and was presently

alarmed to find himself beyond the range of hill on which he had left Mr. Randall and Leonard. The place however distant from the scene of battle, had its own little companies of dead and dying. He became, for a moment uneasy on finding the distance was great which he had traversed, and he was impressed with the idea that he had got beyond the lines of the British pickets. He paused for a moment and put his finger on his lip in the attitude of one who was listening for a sound to determine his course. He was near a bush, on which his eye inadvertently rested. A corpse was sitting up inside the boughs, and the dead unclosed eyes stared upon him as he turned suddenly round.

A horror deeper than that which had seized him in the thickest fight occupied his mind. But before he had recovered himself he became conscious of the sound of something new to him. It was like that of human voices in the extreme distance, which were rapidly approaching; and the next moment the terrible rolling of the hoofs of horses at full gallop excited still more keenly his alarm. A wild hurrah burst upon the air, and a cloud of Cossacks, spear in hand, swept over the hill side. He had hardly had time to notice their dense mass, when scattered, as by a lightning shock, the whole body broke into fragments and swept in solitary units in a hundred directions, like a cloud of smoke, which dense at first, lies heavily on the air, but which in a few seconds frays itself away into a thousand thread-like gossamers upon the sky. The dense mass were broken into all directions. But Dennis had imagined that an eye rested on him as the nearest Cos-

sack swept by the bush ; he was not mistaken ; hardly had the horseman galloped past him than he wheeled suddenly round, and the English soldier-boy stood face to face confronted with the Russian.

Dennis was by no means deficient in personal courage. His position was highly critical. The Cossack for a moment looked at him, and uttering a wild hurrah set up a shriek something between a laugh and a yell. Dennis had no weapon of defence ; looking round he saw a stake stuck in a bush ; he caught it up, and with great dexterity avoiding the well-aimed blow which the Cossack darted at him with his spear, he started on one side and struck the Cossack with full force with his stake. The Russian wheeling suddenly round received the blow on the back of his head, and for a moment stunned, he reeled on the horse, and clutching hold of its mane, fell with a blow on the earth. In another minute, attracted by the noise and shouting of their companion, the other Cossacks had ridden up. Dennis defended himself with the utmost courage, and placed his back against the bush. It took but a very few seconds for the force that surrounded him to overcome him. This accomplished, Dennis was bound, and blindfolded, found himself being whirled through the air a prisoner.

They took the route of the hill side of the battle, and as far as he could judge more than once other victims were added and borne on to swell the triumph of captivity in Sebastopol.

As yet, the horrors of plague, famine, corruption, and crowded masses had not infected that devoted city, but.

as the horses swept along the street beneath the lines of stone, a peculiar sensation of dread crept over the poor boy's mind, when he felt to himself that he was a prisoner among men, who had already begun to earn for themselves a character for barbarity and savage cruelty. A thousand anxious thoughts crowded into his mind with respect to the condition of Leonard, the anxiety he would be in, and the need he might stand in of the kind and tender attention of his faithful servant. Thoughts of home came crowding and brooding over his soul in a way which they had not done since he came from England. He soon found that he was placed in the charge of some one who committed him to a solitary chamber in which the bandage was removed from his eyes.

The grey dawn of morning was just beginning to hover on the wall of his prison, and a sensation of chilling cold seized the limbs of the young captive. He was in the far famed town to which the eyes of the world were looking. What might be his fate there? A bombardment, and assault, and capture, might end as much in the destruction of the English captive as of the Russian soldier.

As far as Dennis could see, there was no intention on the part of his captors to illtreat him; but the painful re-action of the activity of the past few days, and the dull uncertainty of the future weighed heavily upon his spirits. He was surprised, at an early hour, by the appearance of one, whom he supposed to be his jailor, bearing no mean breakfast; after which he was bidden to follow his keeper on a walk, which while it promised to

show him the city, which many Englishmen had longed to see, at the same time threatened to change his prison quarters, perhaps for worse.

It was now the second day from that in which he was taken captive. The long ride of yesterday, with the small food allotted to him, had reduced his strength. He sallied forth into the street. Above his head a sky of cloudless lustre formed a deep blue vault over earth and sea. To the extreme right of him, the long azure line of the Euxine stretched with its blue circle. Upon that portion of it which he could descry between the cliffs that formed the end of the harbour, he noticed two or three ships of the British navy with the flag of his native country on their masts. Close at his feet was the harbour on which the war vessels of Russia floated in idle security. In front of him the hills that swelled over him toward Balaklava formed the southern boundary of the town, while on his left the wandering stream of the Tchernaya found its way into the harbour from the Inkerman road. Above his head rose the houses of solid stone, marking the amazing strength of the great stronghold of the naval power of Russia.

The town seemed large and ample, and multitudes were thronging its streets and high ways.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH.

WE must leave Dennis in Sebastopol and follow the movements of the British army. Up to this moment, the army in the Crimea, and Europe at large, had but a faint idea of what was coming or to come. With the retreating Russians moving towards the south-east, and the ground strewn with their dead, their arms, and their trophies; it was but a very desperate or hazardous game which seemed to open out before the allies. Sebastopol lay to the south. The fleet was waiting to move, and the impression so long given and received in England and Europe appeared likely to be verified that the Allied armies had only to come and look at it to make it melt away as snow wreaths before the glance of a sunbeam.

The question was; what was to be done? Shall the great city be at once captured, if possible, by a *coup de main*? Or, shall a regular siege be formed, and the city taken by long and scientific but certain process?

But two days were to be spent yet in clearing the battle-field, and doing what could be done for the wounded. Thus every hour of day and night men were out in parties seeking missing comrades and burying the dead. The scene was very awful, and the grim chamber of death was enough to turn away with horror and disgust all but those whose province it peculiarly was to attend them in that awful hour; and who

were they? The surgeons were in full request; though the clenched hand and deep-fetched groan told but too sadly how many sufferers lay around waiting though in vain for the kindly hand of amputation or binding to come near to save.

But more than surgeons: the ministers of CHRIST's holy Church, where were they? What hospital needed so many chaplains? What clinic practice was ever like that when blood-soaked turf made the hospital-bed and the cannon ball had been the medium of the epidemic. Here and there could be seen fitting about the sisters of mercy or the Roman Catholic priest lifting up his cross to the dying, or administering the extreme rite of the Church to the poor sufferer whose soul was presently to see GOD. And why not the Church of England too? "Because," said Major De Lacy, who was standing in the little street of the village where temporary hospitals had been erected, "because that Church is a pure Church and we are free, thank GOD, from the vile pollutions of Rome. GOD forbid we should have extreme unction palmed on us."

"True," said young Lorraine, who was leaning on a kind of litter which the men had made for him, and waiting till there was room and leisure for him to be examined and operated on in the hospital. "True, but surely we have something to do; surely we may have ministers to preach repentance to the dying who throng and crowd yonder awful hill," said the young officer, turning his eye heavily towards the sloping hill which overhung the stream and the village, and watching for a moment, where here and there one figure and then

another started up either in the agonies of dying or in the convulsive struggles of anguish and pain.

"Surely there," said the young man, his eyes firing with feeling, "there is work, there is opportunity to preach repentance and the salvation of every one who will turn to CHRIST."

"Oh, confound it, no cant here; thank God the English Church is free of cant. Our good fellows know how to die and no humbug. Young Loraine, I'm ashamed of you," said the major, half in good humoured joke, half in earnest.

The colour mounted to Leonard's face. He never knew before that he could break through his reserve on these subjects. He never thought the outer surface would so readily break. He thought of Jessy; he remembered being once with her in a cottage and hearing her gentle pleading voice entreating a poor youth who had been struck down by sudden accident, to repent. He recollected the reality of her manner, and the happy and peaceful result; hand in hand with his love of Jessy came now the desire to speak for truth. Happy when an early union between the young not only gives point to life but also unites with the heroism for those we love a heroism for religion.

"No, no," said Leonard, "I cannot, I don't agree with you. I have heard the story of the thief on the cross, and I believe that especially in the case of those who have had few opportunities, pardon to a penitent's dying hour may be indeed offered and held out."

"Nonsense," said the major, "my dear fellow, you are touched with Tractarianism. I have a maiden

sister who is too; she is an excellent creature, but she once heard Dr. Pusey preach at Brighton, and this altered her whole life. It is madness, a sort of madness."

"Call it what you will," said Leonard, "it is truth. Oh, why, why has not our Church got hundreds of clergymen here to go forth and scatter over that sad hill-side and preach to those poor fellows? How many of them are now recollecting what they learnt in an English Sunday school: I will answer for it. Remembering old bits of the Lord's Prayer which has not been used perhaps these five years. Oh, why have we no one here to stand on the hill-side and send forth a staff of good men to glean in such a harvest as that is. Why are we so ready and magnificent in our military and naval equipments, and so little heedful of the souls of our men?"

"My dear fellow, you are delirious with your wound. I wish those cursed surgeons were ready; never mind the ministers; give me a surgeon or two; everything for its place and every man for his time: that's the motto of old England and mine too. Soldiers for battle-fields; surgeons for hospitals; and ministers for Church and dinner parties. Monstrous fine things are clergymen in their place—entertaining fellows enough; Oh, yes! I have great respect for the cloth. Church and State, my dear fellow, I'd get drunk in drinking it with any parson in the kingdom; but as for your parsons on the battle-field and when a poor honest fellow wants to die quietly: No! that won't take. If I were Lord Raglan, I wouldn't let it be. Why, my dear fellow,

the old Duke would have strung them up by dozens like bats on a barn door if they had come bothering him in the Peninsula."

How long the excellent major would have gone on, no one knew. Leonard's eye was fixed on the scene on the hill where so many still lay, and weak with pain and loss of blood he seemed scarcely able to heed the eloquence and logic of the gallant major's touching and powerful appeal.

"It's half a pity I wasn't brought up for a Church dignitary. I feel fit for a dean," said the major, muttering to himself, when he found his words were unheeded by his companion. But at this moment his attention was drawn away by the approach of a little cart, which a man was pulling with both his hands with strenuous and painful energy towards the hospital door. A youth lay in the cart so pale, so very pale, that you scarcely could have known that he lived; he was lying back on a kind of pillow which had been placed behind his head. The greatest care seemed to have been taken with him, as if a mother had found her way to the battle-field, summoned from England by the cry of one, the tone of whose cry she had learnt when he rested on her breast in infancy. Not forgotten now—no never!

A look told Leonard that the man drawing the cart was Mr. Randall, and that the youth in it was the wounded boy, around whom so much mysterious history seemed to hang. The clergyman was making his way towards the door of the hospital. He paused; "Can you make way there," said he in a tone of touching earnestness, "I have been trying to help the poor

fellow myself, but my skill has not proved sufficient. I fear he is dying; do help me to bring him into the hospital."

"Can't, sir, impossible," said the gallant Major, who seemed to have his peculiar spleen called forth when he saw a clergyman, as he thought, out of his place; and in his view Mr. Randall was so then, as much as if he himself had mounted a pulpit to preach in a scarlet coat on Sunday.

"Can't, sir, impossible," said he, turning to Leonard, "this young officer has been lying here for some time, and he has the next chance."

Mr. Randall's eye fell on Leonard.

"I gladly waive my chance," said Leonard, "gladly: take in yonder poor youth. I see you are interested deeply in him," said Leonard to Mr. Randall, "take him in."

Mr. Randall sighed, as if some very heavy burden rested on his soul.

"Thank you, thank you, very very much," said he, grasping Leonard's hand, and fixing his eyes again on the poor boy who lay pale and seemingly lifeless by their side.

"As you came up," said Loraine, "I was saying to the Major yonder, how sad it is how little we are doing for the wounded, while"——

"Stop!" said Mr. Randall, passing his hand over his forehead, "stop! it is a call. Yes, yes, I came on purpose—it is just, my God, Thou art just, in my sin Thou punishest me. But oh, how severely. Leonard," said he, turning to him suddenly, "*would* you keep your eye on *him*, and when the hospital is

open, see that he is taken in. I must go. God called me. Yes! I see my work, my sphere, I came to work for CHRIST, not self—nor for *him*,” said he, and his voice sunk into a tone of the deepest melancholy as his eye fell on Raymond.

“Not for him, against Thee, Thee only have I sinned.”

“Stay, stay, pray stay,” said Leonard, frightened at the work and effect his words had created, “stay, I did not mean to——”

“Hush!” said Mr. Randall, laying his hand on Leonard’s arm, “hush! no more—see to him.”

So saying, casting one last sad glance on Raymond, he darted down the ruined street of the village.

Leonard’s interest was keenly excited; a mystery hung over Mr. Randall’s history, and acts, and manners which perplexed him; but the scene around him was too engrossing and absorbing to admit of his occupying his mind in solving mysteries, or diving into the depth of personal history. Mr. Randall’s leading feeling seemed to be a strong impression that all his energy and power was to be devoted to some work for God and his fellow creatures. Was it that some sin against one or against both in days gone by had poisoned his cup of earthly joy and led him to devote all his power to the work of restitution and penitence? It seemed like it. But who was Raymond? Was there any real connection between the two, or was it merely an accidental conjuncture which had brought out Mr. Randall’s interest in the poor wounded fellow in a moment when the heart of the former was peculiarly susceptible, and his feelings peculiarly strong?

Mr. Randall's figure disappeared for a moment in the ravine below the village, and the next minute was seen ascending amid the walls of wounded, dying and dead. He reached one spot where they lay thickest. He gazed around, and having done, so, knelt down a moment on the turf as if to seek for guidance in the difficult scene around him.

There they lay—within reach of his voice he reckoned some fifty forms who by their convulsive throes and heaving agonies were not yet dead, and by their apparent movements and pointed acts seemed not yet beyond the possession of sense and reason. Over no large area lay some two hundred and fifty dead, in whom the agony alike of sin and sorrow had ceased for ever here. There they lay; and as the tree had fallen so it lay. No upheaving of Mr. Randall's hand or that of any other mortal could affect them now; they were where only God's mercy, and to us as yet unascertained process of judgment, will find and treat with them. But with the living, the still living, the Church had yet to act; and if the Church, her ordained ministers; and if so, on this spot, and at this moment, Mr. Randall.

It is the opportunity for the Church to seize when men are dying, to preach penitence to those who never repented hitherto. She came forth in symbol from His Side while round the slopes of the hill hung the echoes of the words, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." And if so, how shall she who is His Bride left on earth to call with beseeching tenderness the sons of men to the great marriage of the Lamb,

hold back from bidding them in at a moment such as this?

Mr. Randall looked round for a place where he might stand, from which the message which he bore might be proclaimed most efficiently for all. Time would not admit of going to each. With many the last grain of the sand was fast leaving the upper part of the hour-glass. With some the brief journey was all but finished. The dark mountains had risen up, which encircled the last scene, and crowned with more or less proximity the journey on which they had gone.

There were symptoms enough of this. Here was one whose head leant with its crown on the turf, and his body inverted formed an arc of which his heels were the other point touching the ground. His clenched jaw and fingers, his staring eyes and hair spread out on the grass, showed that the wound whose red mouth gaped in the arm had brought on lockjaw. Here lay a soldier with his head lying on the breast of a corpse, his arm shot off, and his back pierced with a shot, while he was striving with the other hand to draw his dead comrade's cloak over the wound to keep off the torturing sensation of cold. He was faint, and still, and uncomplaining, but the pale lip and damp forehead told that death was near.

Here was one who with a bayonet wound in his back, lay moaning on the ground, ever and anon cursed the God Who had laid him low, and doubled his fist in hatred to the very Being who was willing to forgive. There was another whose breast had received the bullet, leaving scarce a mark behind; no blood save one

small congealed drop; the blue lips had closed over the aperture made by the ball, leaving hardly a mark behind. He breathed heavily his death-gasp, and every now and then lifted himself up and down to gain ease.

Oh for sympathy's sake alone, Mr. Randall, begin here. Oh tell them only that you see and feel for them—linger near them. He will. For sympathy's sake alone. Yes, that is worth while. To say "I see you and pity you." But for more, far more, God grant it.

But more than that. Let us wander a minute among the heaps of that pool of Bethesda, who were lying there.

They were soldiers of the 23rd and the 7th. True. But what more? They were British heroes, who had died gallantly. True. But what more? They wore the scarlet coat and the cap we knew so well in Pall Mall. They held the bayonet we feared as children at the British Museum and the Palace. True. But what more? They were the wounded at the battle of Alma and the dead, of whom the commander-in-chief will write home. He will call them "gallant soldiers," and the British public will call them "noble fellows." The Queen will shed a tear for them, and their names as privates killed will appear in the "Times" or the "Chronicle" of some day in October or November. No more: we pass on to Inkerman or the opera, to the peace and to to-morrow—but—

Ah there is the question—what are they more? In that group there lay a youth who had been brought up in a Sunday school at Lyford in Dorsetshire. He had been a bright boy in the school; the clergyman

had worked hard with him; he had been prepared for confirmation and was confirmed; he had never yet received communion; he had been the comfort of a widowed mother, who was expecting him home, please God, when the war was done. He had known the Bible well; the story of Joseph; the 51st Psalm; and the parable of the Good Samaritan. He used to teach the little boys to read, and he had been a good example to them. He had enlisted, for troubles had come and heart-breaking poverty on his widowed mother, and she that morning was sitting, poor soul, at her work saying, "I wonder what my Jem's about; he'll do hisself credit anyhow; he'll be made an officer of, and come home, and bless his poor old mother; that he will; bless him," said the old woman emphatically, as she wiped off a tear with a yellow cotton pocket handkerchief from the wrinkle on her cheek. "Bless him."

Yes, but Jem is lying on the hill at Alma; he has just three hours to live; he is shot through the chest; his cap has rolled off; his raven hair, old woman, which you so dearly loved when he was little, is lying wet upon the grass; his hand is on his wound, and his eye is fixed on a dark bird which is sailing, and has been sailing over his head ever since day broke, waiting for another corpse, for he was driven by a sea vulture off the last, and he will have your Jem, poor mother, before sun-down.

But Jem is saying his old prayers, and thinking of the Good Samaritan, and remembering the Sunday school at Lyford, and thinking of his confirmation, and thinking in his own quiet odd way of how he should

like to receive the Holy Communion, and wondering why no clergyman comes to him. Surely England has clergymen enough, and to spare, for such a scene as this.

"For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. JESUS, bless dear mother, and keep her. JESUS, Master, have mercy on me. Read that verse again, Joey. Read it again." For he was thinking, poor fellow, in his wanderings, that he was at the Sunday school at Lyford.

"Oh dear, where am I, mother, dear? It's so cold; put your old plaid shawl over me, dear; over this wound here. There, there, dear mother, that'll do; it's so *nice*. Oh, dear. How many there are all around me. Stop. 'When thou passest through the valley of the shadow of death, I am with thee.' Yes, I know. 'For no pains of death to fall from Thee.' No pains of death. No, oh dear, I was thinking of old Robin's funeral. I thought I was in the churchyard. I forgot I was in bed, dear mother. It is so cold. Take that great bird away; it's so black; do, mother. It's like the linnet in the cage. Do, dear mother; do call it away; I can't get my eye off it; oh dear."

He shut his eyes—he opened them.

"I forgot where I was. I forgot the battle yesterday, and I am dying. JESUS, JESUS, pardon, pardon."

"My poor fellow," said a kind voice close to his ear. "From what you have been saying, I think I may be a comfort to you: would you like to receive the Holy Communion?"

Jem turned his eyes on Mr. Randall. He looked at

him a moment ; the smile faded over his face ; he laid his hands together and said, " Oh, yes, if you think I am fit, I should *so* like it."

Ministers of the Church in England, is there no work for you on the battle fields of the Crimea or the Danube ?

There was another not far off. He had been shot in five places, and he lay insensible. He had been so since he fell at times, though ever and anon he came to himself, and sung wildly till his song melted off again into delirium. There were five or six within touch of him, and they made a little chamber, as it were, in which he lay, and through that long night of dying they seemed to form a kind of brotherhood. The hours seemed years, and they talked, and wept, and laughed, or raved together. First one spoke no more, and then another ; they dropped off one by one so quietly. But this poor fellow, Cooper was his name, Bill Cooper, still kept up, and worried the living with his wandering. He always began to sing the same verse of the evening hymn, which by some strange association, seemed blended in his mind with wounds, and pangs, and stars.

At the end of the last verse, he would rave off into some strange, wild song, which would even startle the wild dog, who prowled over the hill and paused with his front paw on the corpse listening ; he gazed to discover where the shout came from, and then again sought his evening meal. Bill had just sunk off again into slumber : and had talked himself off in his sleep and dreams to quietness.

His history was strange, yet one of hundreds of thousands in this wide world of unknown suffering. He had lived at home till he was seventeen ; a poor, dirty, wretched home it was. Three girls, his sisters, hovered round the potatoe-rind fire, and two other boys, ragged and barefoot, quarrelled with the sisters for the stool or standing room. Their mother, a poor shiftless creature, dirty, miserable, and degraded, neither knew how to manage or how to punish. She hit here and hit there when things went right and gave promise of good things when things went wrong. She loved them all, poor soul, and that was all you could say of her. The father, with long matted hair, and cheeks furrowed with dirt, at six o'clock each day added one voice to the jangling, scolding, loving crew : and only had one distinctive difference, that he was less talkative, and less knowing than any of the rest. Yet strange to say, love reigned in a wondrous and unconscious way amid this crew ; love directed his silent wand, and was, without their knowing it, by all obeyed.

As to Bill, his mother idolized him, she never *said* much in the way of kindness, but if ever any one said a word against him, you would then know what mother's love meant ! If Peggy and Mary did not yield him a place directly he came in, at the fire, they knew "the rights of it ;" and if the poor mother ever got a bit of meat on Sunday, which kept to the end of the week, it was always without words hid away for Bill, and small was the bit that that ragged-haired mother ever tasted herself.

As to the man, they all loved him : He was "Father," and the woman loved him, he was "her man ;" and he loved them ; it was *home* ; and with his shoulders shrugged up, sitting farthest from the chimney, the door shut, the fire consuming odd heaps in the grate, without a word of conversation, save every now and then, "You hear, Peggy ; Ha' done, I say, Poll : you sha'nt say a word to my Bill, the pet," the man would sit for hours, contented, quiet, loving, and happy in his way. If the evening is the wage of the day's labour, certainly that day's labour had an odd earning ; still, it was what he was satisfied with,—so never mind.

Well, one evening Bill did not return home, no one knew why. "Where's Bill ?" said Peggy : "Where's Bill ?" cried Mary, and they sat down on the stool with their hands on their knees, and their shoulders shrugged up to their ears, and asked no more.

"Where's our Bill ?" cried the man, as he came in and sat down, and getting no answer expected none. They all went to bed, and the mother said nothing, and had said nothing. When they were asleep in bed she stole down stairs, and went outside and looked and listened, and wondered, and she walked down to the public, and stood at the head of the lane, and the gravel pits, and listened, but the fog was heavy, and there was not a sound, and she said out there to herself, when no one heard her, "Where can Bill be ?" Poor thing ! Bill was more than half life to her, and though she was not conscious of it, she knew no more what she could do without him, than a poor bird knows what to do when it sits on its young, and its mate has been shot. She

would have felt as solitary without him as Noah's dove did with all the world to itself.

Next day they wondered, and she wondered, and at three in the afternoon, Mrs. Pegg came in, and said, dragging her baby with her, "I say, Susan, you're Bill's 'listed."

"No, be he?" said his mother, without stopping her potatoe rinding, "Ah, our Jem saw him," and Mrs. Pegg went back, and Susan went out to find out if it was true. It was true. She went to Singleton, the nearest town; but the soldiers were gone. I met her coming back. I assure you, I never saw such sorrow: with her draggled gown looped up, and her slipshod shoes and her strange shaped black silk bonnet, she wrung her hands, and said to me, "Oh, sir, my Bill's gone, my poor Bill: I'm sure I never gave him a cross word, and I never said 'nay' to him. He was quiet, sir, and good as a lamb he was: and last night but one, sir, he came home and went to bed with the rest, and said, 'Good night, mother,' just as usual. Oh, sir, what shall I do?" She burst into tears. I believe she had not cried for years before, and they told me she did not cry afterwards, but went on with her usual work. But I assure you, I never saw a more touching sight.

Well, that Bill lay singing the Evening Hymn on the hill of the Alma. Mr. Randall approached him. "My poor fellow, what can I do for you?"

The words, spoken quietly and kindly, seemed to rouse him. Bill opened his eyes, and looked up.

"Who are you?" said he.

"The Minister," said Mr. Randall; "the Minister of God."

"Oh, ah," said Bill, "yes; oh do—do something,—if you will, though," said he, laying tight hold of Mr. Randall's arm, "do just; I begun to do it, but I couldn't go on, you see."

"What?" said Mr. Randall.

"Why, you see this. Poor mother, I never told her as how I was gone, and she'll fret so—I know she will. I want to tell her not to fret, like, but to say as how mayhap I shall get better, and come home a great soldier. But mayhap I mayn't; and I don't think I shall now: so I want her, then, not to fret, but to know as how Bill died honourable."

So saying, the boy dragged out of his bosom a piece of paper, on which he had been scrawling with a pencil. "Here it is," said he, "I could not write no more. It's in this; and he as lies there in the red coat yonder, said as how he'd give it her when he went home: and he said he'd bury me if I died, and tell mother how I lay: for I know as how that'll comfort her wonderful. But somehow the chap doesn't move, and I think somehow, he's dead first."

And so, indeed, he was dead: he who was to have taken Bill's letter home.

"Never mind the letter, my poor fellow," said the Clergyman. "I will promise, if I live, I will myself go to see your mother, and tell her all—all, and—"

"Oh, ah, will you, though?" said Bill, starting round.

"Yes, that I will; and if you die, I will bury you myself. But only now give heed to what I want to say. I want to know if you are fit to die?"

"Ah! there's the question," said Bill. "I'm no scholar, like; mother worn't either, nor father,—he was

no account for anything except hay-binding: and as to Peggy and Mary, they never did know their letters, and mother always said, 'Where's the use of learning letters, without shoes to wear,' and—"

"Well, never mind all that," said Mr. Randall. "Have you ever learnt to pray to God?"

"Ah, summat. I've learnt the LORD's Prayer. Will you hear me say it?"

He said it, in his way: but there was something deeper still which was wanted—much deeper.

Mr. Randall spoke to him. Bill was very tractable, and felt very, very sorry he had done as he had, —swore a bit, and been like other young chaps; but never was drunk—no, never.

He was very willing to learn, and offered to do anything that Mr. Randall would tell him.

"Where is he, LORD, that I might believe Him?" Surely that question was enough to deserve an earnest, real, and proper answer! and if Bill asked it on that wide battle-field, how many more would, and did, unheard, unanswered and un comforted!

"Private 53, John Jones, killed: gunshot wound." Why,—why should that be the chief or only record which England's Church or State are to give of "Private John Jones?" Why no other record expressed, or treasured up in some faithful bosom of the Minister of CHRIST? Bill had all these, I know, but "John Jones" had none. And why not?

Bill knew little of the way to God. True: but his conscience was very soft. He had known little, and had resisted little. He had not gone against what he

knew, so what might not be done for him ? " Who is the LORD, that I might believe ?" was Bill's question, when Mr. Randall had done. " I that speak unto thee am He." I, Who stand unseen on the hill of battle ! I am He, waiting to save to the uttermost all who come unto Me. I, Who stand waiting for My Minister to tell the news, and preach the Gospel to all who will accept it !"

" Bill, from your own confession you have often done wrong. You don't deny it. You have neglected God's Church and daily prayer ; you have sworn ; and you feel you came away against the wish of those you are bound to obey ?"

" Yes, sir."

" You have sometimes gone against your own good feelings, when you had them, and have not lived a life which makes you fit to die ?"

" No, sir."

" You are very sorry for all this ?"

" Yes, sir."

" If God spares your life, will you try and be better ?"

" Oh yes, sir. I said so twenty times last night, to him as lies dead there. We said so to each other ; promised to do better if the LORD spared us."

" Well, you have got all the past to be forgiven."

" A deal, sir."

" God is willing to forgive you all, if you are *really* sorry, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

" Who is the LORD, that I might believe ?"

Minister of the Church in England, go and answer that question on the battle fields of the Crimea or the Danube !

There was a low thatched cottage, covered in June with China roses, and in late autumn with clematis. It stood at the edge of a lane in Shropshire, not far from Oswestry; behind it rose sloping hills, covered with woods, and long lanes and hedgerows broken here and there by triangular commons, over which geese asserted their undisputed yet noisy dominion. That cottage Edward Lawrance always hoped to have. Edward Lawrance was a youth of eighteen, and he loved Nanny Lee, who lived in the next lane to where Edward lodged with his mother. At that time Edward was a carpenter, and he worked hard to save enough to marry Nanny and make her comfortable. Both of them served God faithfully. Nanny had been brought up by a good mother, whose aim had been to serve the Lord from her youth, and Edward was the same. He had long been an example to the youth of Ilford, and the Clergyman had made use of him both as an example and instructor.

Time passed on, and Edward was twenty-one. He and Nanny had earned enough, and they both determined it would be well to marry,—to give up the long walks by the lane on Sunday evenings, and the quiet talking at Nanny's mother's door, where Edward leant with his arm on the doorway, and his forehead on his arm, looking at Nanny, who, with the plait moving quickly through her hand, sat smiling with downcast eyes, and her face red, you scarce knew with which, the setting sunbeam, or the blush of modest love.

And they married. "Nanny, dear," said Edward, the day before, "We are happy, very; God has given

us all : let us thank Him, not only with our hearts and words, but in our lives. Let us resolve to begin from the first to be at Church together on Sundays, and to receive the Holy Communion together, as we have done, and never break it through, or a hundred things may happen to hinder us in after-life, and soon make us willing to be lax. Let us make the rule rightly at once, and at first, and God will bless and help us. It will serve as a bond not easily broken through."

Nanny consented, and they began together. The first Sunday they were together at Church and the Sacrament, and they seldom or never missed. Years rolled by, and four children grew up round Nanny's knee ; and well Edward knew the figures beneath the thatched roof of his own cottage, waiting their father's return, and the shadows which flew up the whitewashed wall inside, when on the winter nights the fire blazed upon the cottage hearth.

Most truly and faithfully did they bring their children up in the fear and love of God. Their daily prayers were minded ; their faults corrected ; their love drawn out to Him Whose loving care had kept them above want, and Whose redeeming love gave them a hope of a home beyond the grave.

Trouble sometimes knocked at Edward's door, but it did him little harm. He was ready. He was not afraid of evil tidings, for his heart stood fast, and he believed in the Lord. At length serious sorrow came : want, no work, all the savings gone, much of the furniture sold, and a long, sad winter, without any regular employment. Many had suffered in the same way in

Ilford and round it, and had, pinched by trouble, enlisted. The army gave good chance, and the war promised to give means to many.

"I shall enlist, Nanny," said Edward, after he had sat an hour with his hands on his knees, leaning over the fire with a look which bordered as nearly on despondency as look ever did upon Edward's countenance. "I think it's the LORD'S Will: I've tried many ways, and I've looked for providential guidings. I shall go."

Nanny's heart heaved nigh to breaking; but she said nothing, but slipped her hand into Edward's, and thought and prayed; and they prayed together earnestly, deeply, and faithfully, that the good God would give a brighter dawn, a fairer morning. Earnestly they prayed. The evening before going came, and the last good-bye.

"Nanny, dear, bear up, and mind the little ones; keep them in the fear of God. May be I'll be back soon; anyhow, you'll have me off the cupboard, and I'll send to you all I can; and the kind people won't forget the soldier's wife and children."

"Nor the good God, Edward."

"No, Nanny; I meant that you know, though I didn't say it—nor the good God."

"Oh, Nanny, it's hard to leave you and little Edward; he'll be a help; and Mary, she'll be a good girl to mother while father's gone; and Robert, he'll scarce know me when I come back, any more than baby, little Willie, who lies asleep on your breast, Nanny."

He went away, in humble trust in God, and Nanny

stayed behind in humble trust too. And Edward lay dying with his head upon the turf, and bayonet wounds through him in three places, and his eye fixed on the sky ; and he was thinking of little Edward, and Robert, and Mary, and Willie, and of "his own Nanny ;" and of how he was going to leave them alone, "yet not alone, because my FATHER is with them." And he thought of his past life—was he fit to die ? And of his sins—had he repented of them ? And of how he longed for the minister of GOD to come, and he had two or three things to ask, and two or three things to say, and a message to send to Nanny, and a Bible he brought with him to send back, if he could, to Edward.

There he lay : he could not move, for he was sorely wounded, and his strength he knew was failing fast, and his life quickly ebbing out. He knew that voice ; he turned his head aside, and saw Mr. Randall's figure moving among the men. He thanked God from his soul, as he stretched out his hand, and smiling said, "O pray, sir, come to me."

You say the picture is unnatural—is it ? There are villages enough in England where soldiers have lived, who have feared God. Are there not now Nannies and little children whose arm and prop lie dead on Alma or at Inkerman ? Were there none on those red hillsides, whose lives given to God made them yearn for the seal of the last communion, for the prayer of the dying hour ? for some one to carry home the message, the worn Bible, or the last request ? And if so, where at fifty heaps of dying were the Mr. Randalls to do the work ?

A figure of some one crawling from under a heap of slain was struggling along the grass to reach Mr. Randall. The figure was evidently of one weak with loss of blood. It yearned, and strove, and struggled with difficulty from under the incumbent weight.

"There's the old sound," said a faint voice. "Good God, I wish I could get at it now; for somehow I think"—

"Think what, Lionel Howard?"

"Why, I think there's something in it *now*, though, by Jove, I never did before."

"In what? In the old LORD'S Prayer you hear being repeated?"

"Yes. I've been a bad young fellow; but my game's up, and I'd like to think a bit before I kick. That's a parson, or I'll be hanged. I'd get to him if it wasn't for these cursed Russians which lie dead at the top of me like carrion."

He made one more struggle, and extricated himself, and at last lay close by Mr. Randall's foot.

"I say, old fellow, say a word by me, will you? I've been a bad 'un, and by Jove, I'm going now. I want to say a word or two, for I'm half frightened, and that's enough; though wouldn't Bob Leicester laugh at me if he heard me now? My dear mother would like to know I had a minister at the end, I know she would."

Lionel Howard: he was nineteen, highly born and highly bred, he had lived in comfort, indolence, and splendour; gambling, drinking, fornication, and vanity had marked his advancing boyhood and youth. His mother had oh! how earnestly contended for him at

the throne of grace. She had set him a high and holy example. She had lived herself a disciplined and holy life. Very gentle had been her influence, and very very anxious her prayer to be guided as to how to bring up her family in the fear of God. But as yet for Lionel no apparent answer to her prayer had come. He was kind, and loved her, but company had ruined him, and at school his own evil heart had been but a nucleus around which gathered flakes of further and further sin.

And the lady prayed for her son at home, prayed, without knowing it, while the cannons of Alma roared; was praying when Lionel fell, struck with the bullet through his lower jaw in the ranks of the 23rd; was praying now when he lay wounded and dying. And he heard Mr. Randall's voice; and he remembered his mother's prayer of old, and the memories of the past were called out by the clergyman's voice in the field of the wounded and the slain.

"I say, old fellow," continued the young aristocrat, "do look here a minute. Come and pray with me to send me safe on my last journey; and I want to send a message to my mother, for she'll hear of me gallantly falling among the 23rd. But I know she'll want to see something more than my name. She'll like to hear I had a parson."

Yes, go, Mr. Randall, go; he is ignorant enough, and knows but little; still what you have seen as you passed by him was the Altar with this inscription,—
"To the unknown God," Whom therefore he ignorantly worships. He worships Him in his own odd way, so

go and instruct him more ; declare God to him revealed in JESUS CHRIST, known and felt through the ordinances and prayers of His Church, and as One who has said, "swear not at all."

"I will," said Mr. Randall, "do anything and all I can. God help me in this awful scene."

There they lay, the widow's son, Joe, Edward, and Lionel; the holy, the wicked, the untaught, side by side, each talking or thinking to himself of scenes far away, and sins to be forgiven; and round them twenty more with tales and histories as real, as true, as sad, as demanding attention as theirs. Oh, Mr. Randall, make haste, for life ebbs fast with some; the stream has rattled over the pebble at the exit of the stream, and is already washing out softly and silently over the sandy beach into the great sea. Make haste, for that hour's work may bring for some salvation!

With the help of one who had accompanied him from the ruined village, he drew the wounded men as near as he could to each other; a stone served one for a prop, and a corpse another. There they lay, a congregation gathered in a circle, with their faces gazing at him, and their heads supported, and their hands together; a congregation.

There were few wandering thoughts there, save when agony or delirium stole them away. There they lay, some within an hour, and some within ten minutes of seeing God. A congregation! aye, seldom had minister of God a more real one; seldom so telling a service as that; seldom such an audience; so pale, so silent, so attentive; so near the end of all things here!

seldom was sermon so real, seldom were prayers so deep ; "Amens" so sincere ; seldom was Holy Communion so craved for, and valued as that which Mr. Randall administered there !

A loud clear voice rose to be heard by all, he said a few words of earnest entreaty that "they would consider their faults ;" he paused, "that they might see whether they were truly sorry." There was a stillness and a groan.

"That they would see, if they meant to do so no more." A long stillness ; Lionel moved. Joe groaned, "Oh never, never," said he, "God help me."

"Whether they were in love and charity with all men." Another stillness. "I say," said Lionel, "look here, tell Lord Monson that I'm heartily sorry I led him into cards : tell him to leave off, I was all wrong. I hope God will forgive me." There was a stillness, morning was breaking, and a sea-vulture sat upon a stone, staring at Mr. Randall, waiting for its prey.

"And that they would turn to JESUS CHRIST, Who died on the Cross, to be forgiven ; He being willing to forgive all who truly turned to Him." A silence again, and the vulture clapped its wings and screamed.

"Through JESUS CHRIST our LORD," said the voice of Joe. There was a sob, and Joe was dead, the first dead of that strange congregation ; his head dropped off the stone, and the vulture made a motion to fly at it.

"And that they would now join in the prayers he would offer." He began with the confession : all said it too ; it was a sound exceeding magnificent ; that united confession !

"We have gone astray, like lost sheep. We have left undone what we ought to have done."

"That's it," said Lionel, "I know that, I can go with every word,—ay, and feel it too, by ——, no, I won't swear, no, I must give up that now; my dear mother, I wish she were here now,—thank God for her, God bless her."

Mr. Randall then said the Lord's Prayer. All followed him with voices clear and distinct, and the vulture, startled, spread his wings, and sailed away and screamed, towards the sea. Even so, blessed JESUS, may the dark tempter flee, when he hears our prayer to Thee.

He then said the twenty-third Psalm. Edward followed it all; it was such a comfort to him just then. He had taught it little Edward, the week before he left him. "I say, just say that verse again. It seemed so true to me: it began something about, 'when I walk,' I can't quite remember it," said Lionel. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me," said Mr. Randall.

"Ay, that was it; well, my dear mother used often to say it. But I never saw it had such meaning before."

Mr. Randall read the story of the thief on the cross, then of the Lost sheep, then of the Sufferings of our Lord, in short passages, and with long pauses.

"Go on," said Lionel. He then offered two of the Prayers for the Visitation of the Sick. One voice, which *had been* distinct, no longer said "Amen." Lionel had ceased, *he was dead*. Mr. Randall moved past the dead. It was quick work that; in quick succession from the teaching of the Church to the judgment:

of GOD. He was in a minute or two to move the clay which a moment before he had respected as life.

He proceeded to administer the Holy Communion. Edward and the widow's son received it with love and joy. Others made signs which indicated their desire to receive their last Communion : so much so, that Mr. Randall found it best to erect a stone in such a position as might serve for the board of that sacred Feast. Seldom, or perhaps never, in the memory of this generation, has the Minister of GOD given that sacred Food to such a company as were gathered round that stone. The completion of each sentence of the service would, in all probability, be the completion of the death-struggle of one or other of the Communicants ; while the scream of the vulture, as he returned to watch the result of the minute since he had been scared away, and settled himself poising on the rock with his featherless neck outstretched, awaiting Mr. Randall's departure, disturbed every now and then the solemnity of the scene.

There were those there who deeply valued the sacred means of grace. Edward had been taught to live upon it, and the widow's son to look to it ; and others, whose lives I have not had time to refer to, had been taught in the village churches of England to look upon it as the great means of grace. Nor is there any need to ask how or why it is so : surely enough for us to know that our Blessed LORD called it *His* "Body and Blood;" that it is referred to in the Acts and in the Epistles, as an act of Christian worship, in act and in kind far higher than ordinary worship ; and

that every age of the Church downwards, viewed it as the highest, though inexpressible means of grace.

The words, "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins," were uttered by the Clergyman with the same pausing solemnity with which he had uttered the previous service. It became no longer only a searching into, or preparation for Communion, but for immediate entrance into the presence of God. In the midst of so many a body broken by the cannon, and so many a wound which had poured out the last life-drop, the thought of His Body "broken" for us, and His Blood "shed" for us, became very full of force and power, exceeding magnificent and consoling.

On such a scene sounded the words, "The Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The widow's son but received the sacred elements a minute before he saw, face to face, the Redeemer whom he had through childhood and boyhood so faithfully served; and though *she* did not see him, as she knelt that morning beside her ragged quilt, more directly than most prayers in England was the widow's heard, when she said, on the morning of the 21st of September, "God bless my poor boy; pardon his sins, and preserve him to Thy heavenly kingdom, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

Edward recovered from his wounds, and returned to Nanny and her children.

The service was over, and Mr. Randall stood for a moment to look at the silent lips that had just now prayed with him, and the rayless eyes which had just

now looked so earnestly for pardon. Seldom had a congregation so rapidly fled into eternity after Morning Service. Seldom had the work of penitence so quickly been paid its wages, or the Absolution of the Church been so rapidly followed by the ratification of God. And not often had the Morning and Communion Services been followed in ten minutes by the Burial Prayers, pronounced over the very worshippers, the echo of whose voices still lingered round the stones of that rough church. But to-day, the words, "The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life," were soon followed by the voice that said, "We commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FLANK MARCH.

THERE have been certain great military movements which have become proverbs in history. Such was the Retreat of the Ten Thousand under Xenophon,—ending in the sight of the sea, and the shout of the worn-out soldier. Such was the passage of the Great St. Bernard by Napoleon I., in which the cannons of France reposed under the shadows of the monastery of eternal snow. Such was the famous retreat on the forts of Torres Vedras performed by the Great Duke,

whose dust has been so soon disturbed by the proclamation of war in London. Worthy of a place among these movements of the past, will be the already famous flank march from the Alma to Balaklava. The retreat of Xenophon illustrated indomitable perseverance ; the passage of the Alps, courageous enterprize ; the retreat on Torres Vedras, strategic foresight, and the Flank march, reckless daring,—a spirit which, however remarkable and striking, has yet been too much the feature of the present war, amongst the most glittering trophies of which will be the cavalry charge of Balaklava, and the personal daring of sergeants and lieutenants.

The expression of this kind of feeling, is the result of pride and self-consciousness. The English nation has had leisure to study itself, and, having had time to gaze at its own features in a mirror, has had full opportunity of carving for itself a statue embodying its own attractions. And this is the history of idolatry ; and the result of idolatry is ever the same,—that of making self the rule of action, and living to express perpetually the peculiarities of character. We have got so into the habit of gazing at our own courage, that every individual in the British army and navy seems to think that he has done his duty if he has acquitted himself with the spirit and daring of a Briton : and to this we may, to a great degree, attribute many of the apparent mistakes and mishaps of the expedition.

Leonard had had a feverish and troubled night, during which there fled before his dreaming mind grotesque groups, in which he saw the lovely form of

Jessy, and the ruthless and scarred face of the Russian whom he had struck down on the embankment. Sweet home voices, and lovely memories of childhood came floating and jarring; and the roar of the cannon, and the groan of the dying, like a plaintive treble, played a discord with an awful bass. Ever and anon he was awakened by the moans of the poor boy who lay in bed beside him; and whenever he opened his eyelid, his eye rested on the form of Mr. Randall, his pale face illuminated by the candle that burnt in the hospital, as he bent anxiously over the countenance of Raymond.

But a louder and more imposing sound roused Leonard from his slumbers. At the break of dawn on the 23rd of September, the French had assembled on the top of the hill, to celebrate, before their departure, the victory with trump and with drum. The wailings of the military music sounded awfully in the dimness of that pallid hour; the wild flourishes and rolls, repeated again and again, broken by peals from the bugles of the infantry, were spirited and heart-stirring, as they descended through the morning air into the valley in which so many dead by this time had found an accustomed pillow. It was a signal for departure, and the flank march was about to commence.

Leonard, who was recovering of his wound, was, with many others, able to follow in the rear. As he left the hospital, the English watch-fires were burning dimly round the grey hill, and Mr. Randall was, with the same anxious care that he had manifested since the battle, constructing a rough means for conveying Raymond.

The fog was creeping slowly up the slope, revealing in its apertures here and there the gallant columns of the English regiments. Far away, the fleet had begun to move along the shore; and the army was soon in motion, leaving behind them the scene of the first, but bloody victory. As Leonard's eye looked onwards, he saw the already retiring columns of France and England in front, but as he cast his wistful gaze on the scene he was leaving, he saw, under the uncertain lights of morning, a mass which seemed to undulate the surface of the soil; it lay dead and heavy, like a gathering of hillocks on the horizon of a wide spread plain; but as he looked, every now and then, there was a sudden movement on the dead mass, which showed it was not of inanimate matter. The movements were, when some wounded Russian, left behind, lifted up his arm, as if expressive of the agonies of loneliness and desertion; or when some wretched being heaved up his suffering frame, to gaze after the receding armies, and sunk back again to wait for death.

Seven hundred of these were left behind, and, honour to his memory, Dr. Thompson, the surgeon of the 44th was left in charge of them. He discharged his duty, and fell an early victim to disease at Balaklava. But the army was advancing. Before them, more than ten miles away, lay the doomed city,—the object of a world's attention; between the armies and it, ran the rivers of the Katcha and the Belbek, while, far to the south-east, leaving the road to Sebastopol open, the broken and beaten columns of Russia were in retreat. Lord Raglan rode in front with his staff.

The Katcha was the first object that came in sight, —a narrow and rapid stream, dotted along its bank with cottages, vineyards, and gardens. Every sort of fruit hung temptingly from the laden boughs ; pears, peaches, apricots, and grapes, in the richest and wildest profusion. The English army spent the night of the 23rd here, in houses that had been more or less despoiled by the Cossack or the retreating armies. On the 25th, the village of Belbek being passed, the march began, which gave the character to the whole of this movement, as bold an undertaking as has ever been achieved, though attended with the greatest possible hazard ; thick wood and brushwood covered the whole surface of the ground, so that the army was broken up into separate fragments, and had the Russians, at any moment, pleased to make an enterprizing attack, it would have been hard to have staved off utter defeat.

Leonard, with many others wounded, including Raymond, was in the extreme rear of the army. It was about three in the afternoon, when turning round suddenly, his eye fell with astonishment, as they were ascending a slight hill, on a number of white houses gleaming in the sunshine. It was Sebastopol, close to which they were at that moment passing.

The straggling nature of the advance made the position of the hindmost troops very hazardous ; it exposed them to being cut off and attacked, without the chance of rescue or protection. The quantity of thick wood made the road very difficult of passage, and the close vicinity of Sebastopol itself,—the retreating Russian army, still harassing on the rear and flank, and the constant

swarms of Cossacks which hovered round them, made the danger great to those, who like Leonard, were in isolated positions.

Lord Raglan was far in advance, and if for a moment the Russians had discovered the real position of the Allies, an attack of a most fatal nature might have been made upon the scattered lines.

Leonard was in advance, and close behind him was Mr. Randall and some few of the wounded, who, for one reason or another, were brought in waggons from the scene of the battle.

Leonard had been indulging himself in many wandering thoughts of the past and the future, when a sudden noise behind made him look around; he discovered one of the waggons to have broken down, and there was no small stir about repairing it.

Raymond, amongst others, was quite unable to move without the aid of the conveyance, and Leonard, with several more, went back to offer what aid they could. It was no easy matter to do the work, and the close vicinity in which they were to the great harbour of Sebastopol increased their anxiety, when on a sudden the sound of guns roaring along the woods in their front indicated the vicinity of the enemy; a shell bounded into the trees close to them, and exploded with tremendous noise, tearing off boughs and branches, and scattering them in the air. The alarm was the greater as they could not tell the amount of the force in front, and the position they were in was not one which would admit easily of escape. One or two of the mounted soldiers offered to ride on, which they did. An anxious

quarter of an hour elapsed, in which they continued reconstructing the broken waggon.

The messengers soon returned, and so far relieved the mind of Leonard and his companion, as to assure them that the attack in front was not one of any imminent danger.

A large body of Russians had suddenly appeared in the van of the army, as they were advancing on Bala-klava. A slight skirmish had taken place, and a shell had burst close to the Commander-in-chief; but the Russians, ignorant of the amazing advantage of their own position, had fled away in all directions, leaving behind them the scattered trophies of food, baggage, and arms.

But dangers of a more formidable nature threatened the little company, who were now being left behind in the wood. Evening was fast closing in; not a vestige of the British army could be seen; the only notice of the vicinity of friends consisted in the heavy distant booming of the cannons of the fleet.

The breakage among the waggons was such that it baffled all the ingenuity of those who were engaged in repairing it. It was known that after the shades of evening the woods would be infested by hordes of Cossacks, who would show but little mercy to wounded or to dying, and who only burnt to avenge something of the defeat at Alma. What added to the difficulty was, that the wounded boy appeared to be dying.

"Lieutenant Loraine," said Mr. Randall approaching him, "let me implore you to move on; leave me with this poor fellow; the clergyman and the dying

will prove a sufficient protection against the lance of the Cossack. You can easily advance, and it is wrong that the life and liberty of any British soldier should be in danger for our sakes at a moment like this. The three or four who are unable to ride, you can leave with me; God will protect them."

"Impossible," said Leonard, "quite; it cannot be the duty of a British officer to leave the unprotected and unarmed in a position like this; Sebastopol is close at hand, and there is no telling what danger may await you."

So saying, the young officer tried to make his way through the brushwood with the aid of one or two of the men, and reaching the top of a small eminence, he gazed around him. Darkness was fast closing in; the lights were clearly visible in Sebastopol, and every now and then sounds from that quarter showed that there was life and stir in the devoted city. At that moment a sound, as of a horse plunging through thickets, struck on the ear. Leonard turned quickly round to return to the company, every now and then listening to the evidently advancing trooper, whom he imagined to be an outpost of a band of Cossacks.

Having reached his companions, they began to consider what means of defence they had at their command. Their company consisted of about ten men, eight of whom had been more or less wounded, but who were yet in a condition either for advance or defence, while half-a-dozen round Mr. Randall depended on the rest for both purposes. A large tree stretched out its boughs over them, against whose trunk Raymond

was reclining. To man the boughs of the tree with what rifles they had amongst them, and to keep a sharp look out on the advancing foe was the advice of Leonard. He was already in the tree, and watching closely the approach of the horseman, who still appeared to be alone, for no further shape or sound indicated the approach of the expected Cossacks. The first impulse was to raise his rifle and fire, but more than one thought prevented him; it might awaken alarm, or the advancing figure might be that of a friend. The minds of the little company were considerably relieved on hearing the horseman pass by them; his mission clearly was not to them. It turned out afterwards that it was Lieutenant Maxse, whose famous night ride through the wood has left him an honoured place in the early part of the Crimean campaign. He had been sent by the Commander round the north side of Sebastopol to communicate with the fleet, but the transient alarm was not without its important use to Loraine and those with him.

Aroused by the sound of the solitary rider's horse, a body of Cossacks who were in the neighbourhood, took their route in the direction of Leonard, and in no unmistakeable manner their approach was indicated by their well-known shout—awfully famous in the French campaign of 1812—and not without its alarming associations in the expedition to Sebastopol. The enemy was clearly at hand, and coming in such a direction as would inevitably bring them on to our friends. The brushwood and the thickets were their best safeguards.

Leonard and his companions quickly again manned their fortress, and, from the boughs of the tree, awaited the advance of the foe. Five were left below the tree to guard their hospital, while, with the help of their wag-gons and baggage, they erected a kind of barricade against the spear of the horseman. The danger was critical. There was not a sound to break the stillness, and young Loraine felt in no small degree proud of his important yet perilous position.

At that moment, on a sudden, the brushwood gave way before a horseman in advance of the rest, as if on the scent of prey. The dim light of the night was sufficient for Loraine to descry the outline of his figure, which loomed against the sky; he hesitated for an instant what to do, the sound of his firelock must, of necessity, announce to the Russians the presence of their victims, but it might, at the same time, give the alarm to some straggling band of English soldiers who would come to their assistance. He had just determined to unsaddle the horseman with the bullet, when a heavy dull noise sounded through the air, and a stifled groan instantly followed.

"Well done, Dick," were the words that told to Loraine, that one of his own men had had the sagacity to creep into the brush, under cover of the sound of the horsehoofs, and striking with the butt of his rifle the head of the Cossack, had brought him with a single groan to death. His comrade was not so successful in catching the rein of the horse, who, finding himself riderless, immediately dashed back toward the advancing troop.

The alarm thus given, there was scarcely the pause of a minute before the wild hurrahs of the Cossack told our friends that the crisis of their fate had arrived. The foremost horseman writhed in his saddle before the bullet of Loraine's rifle ; another and another dropped wounded before the certain volleys from the trees. But it was quite impossible, as soon as the enemy had been able to ascertain the position of the English, to continue this successful check to their advance. A yell of agony, which broke up in terrible distinctness through the air, burst from the lip of a poor wounded fellow, through whose breast and back, five inches into the ground, a Cossack's spear had been thrust. The fellow writhed up round the lance in his last agony, and gave out his life with a yell upon the midnight darkness. The hand of the successful assailant was paralysed by his death blow, which was given him by a bullet from the boughs of the tree above him. The momentary interval had been well employed in manning the barricade, and a sharp though no doubtful contest ensued.

But the attack soon became desperate. Numbers overwhelmed the little company, and more than one of the wounded had already died under the Cossack's lance.

Further resistance was hopeless ; and Leonard clearly saw that it must simply end in the death of all the company. Most anxiously and courageously did Mr. Randall guard his charge. Leonard had used every effort of dexterity and military knowledge to defend his barricade, and more than one of his assailants were left dead ; while many more carried away wounds

which made them remember what an English soldier *could* do against odds so desperate.

They were compelled at last to yield, and the whole company were taken prisoners by their triumphant foe.

The night was dark, and by this time the sounds of the advancing British army, had died away towards the south.

The Cossacks surrounded their captives, and were fast making their way towards Sebastopol. They hurried their prisoners on the more rapidly from the anxiety they felt, lest they might be pursued by any straggling men of the Allied force. A captivity in the doomed city was cheerless prospect enough to a young soldier fresh for war, and full of ardent hope; but the alarm was greater when the prospect rose before the mind of coming famine or death in more hideous form, which a besieging army must inflict on their own men who might be prisoners in the fortress.

With these feelings, Leonard was riding moodily behind the rest, closely guarded. Two English soldiers rode near him. The night at every step grew darker, and the thickening trees made the advance more and more difficult. The nature of the ground utterly prevented the possibility of many riding together, and the Cossack had frequently to leave a bush or a brake between his captive and himself.

A hand touched Leonard and he started. One of his own men was behind him. "Sir," said he in a low whisper, "now's the time; be ready at the next bush yonder; Jack and I will make a move as if we were trying to make off, and that will draw the atten-

tion of the Russians. You spring off over the bush, and so escape to the south. They'll not overtake you; trust them for it."

"What," said Leonard, "and leave you to die for me? No!"

"Don't fear that, sir, you make off; we'll not go so far as to be killed: they care a deal too much to drive a good team of living captives into Sebastopol, than to cumber themselves with any dead lumber: trust them for it."

The approach of a Cossack stopped this brief conversation, and the next moment the bush again disturbed their advance. In an instant, a struggle, and a consequent clamour broke on Leonard's ear, and the Cossack who rode beside him, plunged into the brake.

The feint told well; and Leonard turned his horse's head. The impulse of the rider was conveyed to his horse, and in a few seconds the crushing bough and brier told the Cossacks that one of their victims had escaped. Over hill and chasm Leonard flew, and his pursuers behind him. But the desperate venture for life and liberty is stronger than the pursuer's energy, and Leonard soon outstripped his man. The sound of the hoofs had ceased to rattle on his ear—he paused—the pursuers had stopped; the darkness of night hung around him. He considered a moment whether he should return to aid the little company, but he soon saw that he could do them no good by returning, and might do something by joining the army.

Accordingly without more delay he rode in the direction of the Allies. No long ride brought him to the

rear of the English, and with joy Loraine found himself among his own; though his heart felt heavy, and his conscience still a little reproached him for leaving those he could not aid.

Meantime, keeping closer watch, the Cossacks conveyed their victims to Sebastopol, and long ere morning dawned, Mr. Randall and Raymond, with the remainder of the company, found themselves captives in the city where Dennis already had been lamenting his fate.

The treatment they received was kind and considerate. But the remembrance that in the famine or the bombardment, the English captive would fare even worse than the Russian serf, made their position sad and forlorn enough. It was no small consolation to Mr. Randall, that he was permitted to tend his charge.

The morning broke on the prisoners in the fortress, and Leonard with his regiment.

CHAPTER X.

CICELY AND JESSY.

"My dear Cicely, do you intend going to the Lecture at the Mechanics' Institute, to-morrow evening?"

"My dear mamma, yes, of course; I would not miss it for the world: I hope everybody will go: if it were not for the sake of enlightening our dreadfully unintellectual neighbourhood, at least for the collection at the door, which is to go to the Patriotic Fund."

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Loraine, "I feel a little doubtful, too: I believe your father means to go; but I do not feel a very great interest in the speculative view of the war, when the practical view, is one in which we are so painfully concerned."

Cicely arranged the ornaments on the chimney-piece, and cleared her throat, and then looked down at the coals on the fire, and said quickly, "Well, dear mamma, I can't understand that feeling, I confess. Leonard has been wounded, but the accounts are excellent, and I do not believe that you, or any of us, had rather he should be in any other position than he is; he has been doing his duty, and——"

"My love," interrupted Mrs. Loraine, "your view is very good for those who like it, but you must let me have my own opinion; I do not wish to interfere with your going to the Lecture; but I do not wish to go, and perhaps a mother's feelings might be a little excused, if they don't exactly fall in with those of another."

"Well, but, dear mamma—ah, well," said Cicely, turning round, and taking up a volume of Miss Austen's "Emma," which was lying on the table, with a manner which clearly showed that she *did* think other people had not a right to opinions, and that one rule was to cut at least all sensible people with as rigid and determined a line as that which always decided the southern boundary of Cicely Loraine's very narrow little collar, which she always wore round her neck, which knew no change except when the clean one took the place of the one which Cicely *said* was not clean, two hours before.

Mrs. Loraine was quite used to Cicely's line and

manner, and she had given up all attempt to alter matters, or to worry herself about them. She was thoroughly sensible, and it was that portion of her character which had been given to Cicely. The only thing was that Mrs. Loraine's good sense took the line of thinking that there might be two views of the same thing; and if another did not feel it, saying no more; while Cicely in her good sense took a very sensible view of everything, but felt that everybody else ought to take the same view, and if they did not, she determined *not* to hold her tongue on the subject, but to be astonished. In short, Mrs. Loraine had good sense at fifty, and Cicely at twenty.

Mothers are not so bad after all; and the day may come when the world, or even the present generation, will be wise enough to discern that it is very possible that the appreciation of Coal Tickets, and the admiration of "In Memoriam," or seeing through the allegories of Hunt's pictures, or preferring Beethoven and Mendelssohn to Handel and Mozart—are not *necessary* attributes of good sense, though we heartily feel that all these *are* the right things. A mother *may* have good sense who admires George III., likes Dr. Johnson, reads *Rasselas* still, and talks of "dear old Sir Joshua Reynolds."

Cicely happened to fall in very much with all these objects of good sense; but she had her own likings nevertheless.

We have read somewhere of a certain "old Aunt Sarah," who, we think, was the most perfect and beautiful character ever drawn, and we owe to the artist

of that sketch a debt we can never repay, and hope she may not be offended when we say, that she is nearer Miss Austen than any other English authoress we have met with, without some of Miss Austen's worst faults. Nevertheless, we never could see why Gertrude and Margaret, and a whole host more, never were allowed to respect their mothers. But we are wandering: at least Cicely had not read "Catherine Ashton," nor are we sure she would have liked it.

"Are you going out, my dear?" said Mrs. Loraine, who had still been placidly going on with her worsted work with a foot upon a stool, without speaking.

The reader may perhaps ask what had taken place while we have been talking about that despised class now-a-days, *mothers*. Exactly. Cicely had been writing a note, clearing her throat, reading the note through again, and placing it beautifully in an envelope, and leaving it directed to "Mrs. Childers." It was to beg the widow to come to the Lecture.

"Yes, mamma. I am going to Jessy; I think she would like to go to the Lecture."

"Very well," and Mrs. Loraine did not take her eyes off her work, but went on, thinking in herself that it was very unlikely Jessy *would* go to the Lecture, still she knew that if she said anything, it would of necessity provoke discussion; and she knew also, that the reason why Cicely had not yet closed the door, but *had* returned to place her note in exactly a parallel line with the rim of the writing-book, was in the earnest hope that her mother *would* have said "Do take care how you propose it to Jessy, and what you say to her,

for the poor girl is fretting a good deal about Leonard."

Then Cicely would have said, "Dear mamma, Jessy is very weak, and she ought to be roused, and——"

But, however, it is certainly not our duty to settle what Cicely *would* have said. The door closed, and she was gone, and Mrs. Loraine was left alone.

Cicely hastened to the Parsonage; she rung the bell, and learnt that the maidservant believed that Miss Seymour was at home. Cicely did quite what she liked in the Parsonage, and walked where she pleased through the house; she reached Jessy's room; she opened the door, but the room was empty.

It was a small room; a window opened down to the ground on a terrace which led along under the west side of the Parsonage. The church tower rose calm and grey over the dark, and now variegated, foliage of some elms and oaks, which rose from a high green bank in the Parsonage garden; it was a square tower, and very old; a buttress, of rather a peculiar structure, rose along one edge of the tower in sight of Jessy's window. She loved that tower much; she knew every tone of its chime; the music was the accompaniment of many of the songs of her youth, sad and gay, though the former were the most frequent in Jessy's mind.

"How delightful those church bells are, they are so cheerful," Cicely used to say.

"I hardly know," Jessy would answer, "somehow they are always sad to me."

On the table lay a writing-book open, and a letter

begun; and by its side another letter opened, with sundry foreign postmarks over it.

Tennyson's "Princess" lay open on the table; a volume of Dante; one of Shakespeare, containing Hamlet; Eothen, and the Life of Louis XVII., lay around; while in the middle a small glass vase of turquoise blue stood full of clematis and scarlet geraniums.

Cicely looked round the room; she had time to study it. Though she could not understand it, she could not but admire it. The simplicity and beauty of the ornaments and arrangements were strongly indicative of character. The few pictures which decorated the walls spoke the taste of the occupant. The Overbeck's Virgin and child; and the two figures of the girl and her child-sister, so sweetly yet sadly reversed in its companion, where the former, no longer guarding, kneels to gaze on the dear companion of her earlier walk; alike showed Jessy's refinement and affectionate heart. The few pieces of white jessamine which lay on the table, shedding its faint odour round the room, told the same tale.

Cicely had taken up a miniature of Leonard, which lay on the table, when the light yet slow footstep of Jessy was heard on the terrace. She had been in the garden, and as she approached her window, her eyes were bent on some flowers which she had gathered, whose leaves she was pulling off one by one, and letting them fly on the air; the long dark lashes which covered her eyes seemed almost resting on the cheek, which was flushed with her walk; her hair hung in its rich

bright curls over her neck ; while a bonnet, tied loosely, fell back negligently over her shoulders. She sighed as she reached the window, and plucked off the last petal of the pale chrysanthemum which she held in her hand. She started on seeing Cicely.

"Oh Cicely, dear," said Jessy, "are you here? I did not know it: I am sorry the room is so untidy, but somehow it always is now: do sit down. Is it not a lovely day?" said Jessy, as, the colour mounting quickly to her face, she threw the shattered flower on the table, and sat down by Cicely's side.

"How are you to-day, Jessy? I heard you were not well: why do you persist in wandering about so? you know it is not good for you, and exhausts you very much."

"Oh, I do so enjoy it," said Jessy; "I often get tired of myself now I have not got Leonard to come in and read to me, and I go out to old Nanny's and Mrs. Tilly's at the garden gate. They are such dear old people, you know, Cicely, though you always laugh at me for saying so, and I am so happy when I am with them."

"Well, I didn't come just now, certainly, to dwell on any very romantic subject. I came to ask you to go to the Lecture on the war this evening, in the reading-room. Papa and I are going, and I should so like you to come too."

"No, I think not," said Jessy, her voice half faltering: "I think not; I hear enough of the war, and all its troubles. I do not want to yield to my weakness, but I don't see any object in going; and after these

accounts of dear Leonard's wound and all, I had rather not add to the struggle to bear up unnecessarily."

"Well, I never knew anything like you all," said Cicely, in a half vexed tone: "really the war seems to have turned some of your minds. It is too absurd. Mamma says she won't go for some similar reason; I cannot understand this nervous feeling about such a thing, it appears like a kind of madness to me—weakness anyhow."

"I knew you would scold me, dear Cicely, but indeed I cannot help it. If I could do anything by going, I would, but I don't see that I could; I want to be firm and self-disciplined, I am sure, for Leonard's sake as well as my own; but I do not see any need here." And poor Jessie's sigh showed how deeply her troubles about Leonard weighed upon her mind.

"Well," said Cicely, rising, "I will not press you: you shall not go if you do not like: it will be an interesting sight; I hear the militia are to be present. For my part, I confess, I cannot understand any of you."

"Oh no, dear Cicely; I know I am very foolish, and I want to overcome it, and will in anything where I ought and must; and if it were for any good to anyone or for Leonard, oh, what would I not do? But I do not see how this can be so. You were born, you know, to do good, Cicely; I am sure I wish the wounded and sick had you with them out there; you could manage them so admirably."

"Thank you," said Cicely, "I am much obliged to you."

Jessy rose quickly. "Now you are not vexed, are you, Cicely?"

"No, no, vexed, no; how should I be?" said Cicely, good-naturedly. "But I must go, Jessy, or I shall be late; I will leave you to your happiness and loneliness. Oh, Jessy, you were just cut out for Leonard, and Leonard for you."

"You know 'Marriages were made in heaven,'" said Jessy with a smile, as Cicely kissed her, and was gone. Though the smile was soon followed by a sigh, when finding herself alone Jessy sunk back into her low arm-chair which stood by the open window, and took up the miniature of Leonard, on which she fixed her large eager eyes, as if, through its medium, she would fill her soul with the dear and grateful memories of the past and distant. She started, as from a reverie, and laying the much loved miniature beside her, went on with the long letter to Leonard, which already threatened to be a diary; on whose pages, Jessy's clinging and loving spirit was painting its own portrait in its own soft colours.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LECTURE.

BUT we will go to the Lecture too.

It was given at the large room of Brandon by a gentleman from the neighbouring parish. He had purposed delivering more such, in order to enlighten

the people as to the causes, bearings, and history of the war, and to awaken sympathy in its progress, and towards those in suffering.

It was fully attended; and as there was a large militia force in the neighbourhood, the soldiers present were an important and principal feature in the audience. The widow did come. She had a kind of reverence for Cicely, and thought that what she requested was to be done. Accordingly she set out with her widow's bonnet on her solitary walk to the Lecture with that air of quiet resignation, which had so marked her course from the beginning, and which seemed to say, "It matters little to me, whether I go or stay; words and descriptions do not affect realities." She met Cicely and Mr. Loraine near the door.

Cicely with a kind, open, and patronising manner went forward to the widow, who received the greeting with her usual oldfashioned courtesy, which showed alike deference and independence.

The widow had heard from Allen; his wounds had been slight, at least so he said; but the widow knew well enough the school which he had been brought up in, and felt no trust in an account which was full of cheerfulness, affection, and consideration for her feelings and position.

But the Lecturer had begun.

All minds at this moment are turned to the British soldier; and to ascertain and define his character is a matter of no small interest and importance. We want

a standard by which to test him for ourselves, and we need some definite view to place before him of what he should be. The soldiers of Persia, Greece, and Rome alike with those of Germany and France, have had their distinctive features, and our insular position, our Christianity, our Saxon character, and the infusion of other elements of race and power give the English soldier as distinct a characteristic.

To ascertain this it will be well to take the different epochs of English military history, and illustrate from them the various features of our soldiers. Whatever they were in those periods they ought to be now, and something more besides; and the several incidents of those periods should be brought out as portraits of the past, which the veteran, the recruit, or the militia man of the present day should study and imitate.

I will mention certain special features for characteristics of the true British soldier, without which he falls short of his high profession and calling:—love of country, love of the king, love of his comrade, power of endurance, obedience to orders, courage, devotion in youth, self-denial and absence of selfishness, readiness, and lastly, dogged and unflinching steadiness under fire.

These attributes are the essentials of a soldier, and two or three of them distinctively of a British soldier. Above all and beyond all these, religion and acting up to the law of Christianity imbibed in every school and Sunday school in the kingdom, crowns the whole character; without it the other attributes fall scattering round like fragments of an arch when the keystone is

gone, or arrows when the leash is cut which bound them together.

I will illustrate these attributes from English history. And first, the love of country and the will to defend its shores is peculiarly and in a high measure the duty and attribute of an English soldier. His insular position, and the sea for his eternal neighbour, makes the defence of the coast a definite duty, and realizes to him in a peculiar manner the fact of his having a country of his own. He is especially summoned by the monarch for the defence of the homes and property of his native land. And if we would ascertain the character of a soldier in the present war, we cannot do better than to cast the eye back on the few instances which we have, but as magnificent as they are few, of the defence of our shores. Amongst them of course stand remarkably forward, the universal readiness to repel the threatened invasion of Napoleon, and the self-devotion of Harold in resisting the approach of the Conqueror. The recollection of tales like these should fire the soldier of 1855 with a like enthusiasm, and he should light the torch of the present from the unexpired flame of the past.

1. The tale of Harold is as follows.

“The English, chiefly infantry, were arranged by Harold into an impenetrable wedge. Their shields covered their bodies. Their arms wielded the battle-axe. Harold, whose courage was equal to his dignity, quitted his horse to share the danger and glory on foot. His brothers accompanied him; and his banner, in which the figure of a man in combat, woven sumptu-

ously with gold and jewels, shone conspicuous to his troops, was implanted near him.

William, whose eye was searching every part of the field, inquired of a warrior near him, where he thought Harold stood. 'In that dense mass on the top of the hill, for there his standard seems displayed,' was the answer. William expressed his surprise at his presence in the conflict, and his confidence that on that day his breach of faith would be punished. The English had possessed themselves of the hilly ground, which was flanked by a wood. The cavalry dismounted and added to the firm mass of Harold's array. The Norman foot advancing discharged their missile weapons with effect; but the English with patient valour kept their ground. They returned the attack with spears and lances, with their terrible battle-axes, their ancient weapons, and with stones, whose falling masses were directed to overwhelm. The battle glowed. Distant weapons were abandoned for a closer conflict. The clamour of the engaging soldiers was drowned in the clashing of their weapons and the groans of the dying. Valour abounded on both sides, and the chieftains fought with all the desperate firmness of personal enmity and ardent ambition. Befriended by the elevation of their ground, by the mass of their phalanx, and by their Saxon axes, which cut through all the armour of their adversaries, the undaunted English not merely sustained but repelled every attack. Intimidated by such invincible fortitude, the foot and cavalry of Bretagne, and all the other allies of William in the left wing gave way. The impression extended along all his line. It was in-

creased by a rumour that the duke had fallen. Dismay began to unnerve his army; a general flight seemed about to ensue.

William, observing the critical moment which threatened destruction to his glory, rushed among the fugitives, striking or menacing them with his spear. His helmet was thrown from his head. The indignant countenance of their leader was visible: 'Behold me, I live; and I will conquer yet, with God's assistance. What madness induces you to fly? What way can be found for your escape? They whom you may kill like cattle, if you choose, are driving and destroying you. You fly from victory—from deathless honour. You run upon ruin and everlasting disgrace. If you retreat not one of you but will perish.'

At these words they rallied,—he led them to another onset. His sword strewed his path with slaughter. Their valour and their hopes revived. Their charge upon their pursuers was destruction; they rushed impetuously on the rest.

But the main body of the English continued unmoved and impenetrable. All the fury of the Normans and their allies could force no opening. An unbroken wall of courageous soldiery was everywhere present. Depressed by this resistance William's mind was roused to attempt a stratagem. He had seen the success with which his rallied troops had turned upon those who pursued them. He resolved to hazard a feigned retreat, to seduce the English into the disorder of a confident pursuit, and to profit by their diffusion.

A body of a thousand horse, under the Count of

Boulogne, were intrusted with the execution of this manœuvre. With a horrible outcry they rushed upon the English, then suddenly checking themselves, as if intimidated, they effected a hasty flight. The English were cheated. They threw themselves eagerly on the retreating Normans, and at first they prospered, for the Normans retired upon a great ditch or excavation somewhat concealed by its vegetation. Driven upon this great numbers perished, and some of the English were dragged into the ruin. But while this incident was occupying their attention the duke's main body rushed upon the pursuers and the rest of their army. The English endeavoured to regain their position; the cavalry turned upon them, and thus enclosed they fell victims to the skilful movement of their opponents. Twice was the Norman artifice repeated, and twice had the English to mourn their credulous pursuit. In the heat of the struggle twenty Normans pledged themselves to each other to attack in conjunction the great standard of Harold. Eyeing the expected prize they rushed impetuously towards it. In attempting to penetrate through the hostile battalions many of the party fell, but their object not having been foreseen the survivors secured it.

The battle continued with many changes of fortune. The rival commanders distinguished themselves for their personal exertions. Harold emulated the merit and equalled the achievements of the bravest soldiers, at the same time that he discharged the vigilant duty of the general. William was constantly the example to his troops. He had three horses killed

under him ; but undaunted by peril he was everywhere the foremost. Such was the general enthusiasm that they who were exhausted by the loss of blood and strength still fought on leaning on their supporting shields. The more disabled, by their voice and gestures strove to animate their friends.

The sun was departing from the western horizon, and the victory was still undecided. While Harold lived and fought his valorous countrymen were invincible, but an order of the duke's by occasioning his fate gained the splendid laurel. To harass the hinder ranks of that firm mass which he could not by his front attack destroy, he directed his archers not to shoot horizontally at the English, but to discharge their arrows upwards into the sky. These fell with fatal effect on the more distant troops. The random shafts descended like impetuous hail, and one of them pierced the gallant Harold in the eye. A furious charge of the Norman horse increased the disorder which the king's wound must have occasioned ; his pain disabled him, and he was mortally wounded. As the evening closed one of the combatants had the brutality to strike into his thigh after he was dead, for which William with nobler feelings disgraced him on the field. Panic scattered the English on their leader's death. The Normans vigorously pursued though the broken ground and frequent ditches checked their ardour. Encouraged by observing this, a part of the fugitives rallied, and, indignant at the prospect of surrendering their country to foreigners, they fought to renew the combat. William ordered the Count Eustace and his followers to the

attack. The count exposed the peril and advised a retreat. He was at this instant vehemently struck in his neck, and his face was covered with blood. The duke undismayed led on his men to the conflict. Some of his noblest Normans fell, but he completed his hard-earned victory."

2. The love of comrades is another peculiar attribute of the British soldier. Value for the bond of brotherhood is a striking feature amongst us. Our insular position, and the way in which our men are led to form into societies and companies owing to their inherent practical tendencies, fosters the spirit of brotherhood, and we find it at work with the army.

The soldier respects his comrade and is jealous for the honour of the member of his own company. We have had touching instances of this in the present war. Nor is the page of the military history of England deficient in like examples. The soldier of '55 need not look far for instances of chivalrous devotion to a comrade.

The following tale, borrowed from the reign of Edward III., will suffice to show what I mean:—

"Among the many brave men and successful officers who followed Edward III. in his French wars, there was none whose reputation stood higher than that of Sir Walter Manny. He had been employed at the commencement of hostilities to relieve the castle of Hennebon, then closely besieged by Charles of Blois and in a great strait.

He executed the commission valiantly, entering the harbour with the ships in spite of the best opposition

of the besiegers, and executing a series of sallies with so much vigour, that they were glad, ere long, to withdraw from the enterprise. He next fell upon Louis of Spain, who was devastating the province, and after a hot pursuit, both by sea and land, overtook and totally routed him. Now Louis was a revengeful and a bloodthirsty man. He had been wounded in the encounter, and narrowly escaped being taken, and he vowed that he would make the first English knights that might fall into his hands smart for it.

Meanwhile Manny was on his homeward march; which, however, he interrupted to attack a small fortress called Roche Perion, about three leagues distance from Dinaut. He was repulsed with loss, two gallant knights, Sir John Robler and Sir Matthew Trelawney, being among the list of wounded; and both were unfortunately made prisoners by a detachment which came out against Manny's rear from the castle of Faouet. In vain their chief flew to the rescue. Faouet proved as little accessible to his means as Roche Perion, and help could be procured. The advance of Charles of Blois was reported, and Manny found himself under the necessity of retreating. Once more he was shut up in Hennebon, of which Charles, for the second time, formed the siege.

The besieging army was soon joined by detachments from all the neighbouring garrisons; and among other chiefs came the lord of Faouet, bringing his two captive Englishmen in his train. Right glad was Charles to find them in this plight; for they were brave soldiers and active, and not a little evil had they brought

to his cause in that quarter. But the most joyful man of all was Louis of Spain. 'Now,' said he to himself, 'my thirst of vengeance shall be slaked.' Whereupon he proceeded to the tent of the Prince, and obtaining a boon, he desired that Sir John Robler and Sir Matthew Trelawney should be given up to him. 'Whereupon dost thou demand my prisoners?' replied Charles. 'I will tell thee,' was the reply. 'They have discomfited, pursued, and wounded me; they have also slain the lord Alphonso, my nephew; and I have no other way of being avenged of them than by having them beheaded in sight of their friends, who are shut up in Hennebon.'

Charles protested against so cruel a proceeding, but in vain. The Spaniard remained firm to his purpose, and a prince's royal word having been passed, he was compelled to render up his captives, albeit with extreme reluctance. But there was help at hand for them, in a quarter whence they could have least expected it to come, through spies, of which he had many in the French camp. Manny heard of the danger of his friends, and he forthwith proposed to his officers that they should attempt the rescue. There was no backwardness on their parts to undertake so hazardous and noble an enterprise. They volunteered to a man to act as their general might suggest; and he soon assigned to each of them his proper post.

Manny's object was to reach unobserved, the tent of Louis of Spain, where his spies informed him that the two knights lay bound, and to which one offered to guide him. This, however, was not to be done, unless the enemy's attention could be engrossed elsewhere, and

Sir Aumari de Clisson was therefore directed with three hundred men-at-arms, and a thousand good archers, to make a sortie. He did so from the great gate, and so fierce was the onset, and so violent the clamour, that from far and near the besiegers hurried to meet and repel the danger. Meanwhile Manny, in person, putting himself at the head of one hundred English knights and five hundred archers, stole out by a postern. Amid the tumult occasioned by the fight they were not noticed, for pickets and out-guards seem to have been but loosely kept in those days, and making a wide detour, they arrived without so much as a challenge at Louis's tent. Not a cry was raised, not a trumpet blown. They rode at the guard, cut them down, took up their countrymen and placed them on led horses, and then, having sustained no loss, retired by the way they had come and reached Hennebon in safety.

As may be supposed, they were not slow in joining Sir Aumari and his brave companions in the battle. The liberated captives too bore them company, and the sound of their war cry informing Louis of all that had happened, he suspected treason on the side of Charles, and withdrew from the camp. It does not appear that in a three-hours encounter very many lives were lost. But at its termination the siege of Hennebon was raised; and Manny won in consequence all the honour that attached to skill as a leader, and hardihood as a knight."

3. Napoleon Bonaparte said that one part of a soldier was courage and two parts endurance. It is a glorious thing to fight gallantly, but it is a more glorious thing to suffer patiently. Used to the comforts of a domestic

home, the kindly tone of a wife, and the smile of the little child, the British soldier has something to endure when in a foreign campaign; he is exposed to want, trouble, and disease; but there will be no opportunity so noble in which he may show his temper and character. Most striking amongst all the instances of this virtue in English history is the story of the battle of Agincourt, which I will here give as an heir-loom to every British soldier.

“The night was cold, dark, and rainy; but numerous fires illumined the horizon, and bursts of laughter and merriment were heard from the French lines. The men collected round their banners, spent their time in revelling and debate, discussed the probable event of the next day, and fixed the ransom of the English king and his barons. No one suspected the possibility of defeat; and yet they could not be ignorant that they lay in the vicinity of the field of Creci.

To the English it was a night of hope and fear, of suspense and anxiety. They had been wasted with disease, broken with fatigue, and weakened by the many privations which must attend the march of an army through a hostile country, and in the presence of a superior force. But they were supported by the spirit and confidence of their gallant leader, and by the proud recollection of the victories won in similar circumstances by their fathers. As men, however, who had staked their lives on the issue of the approaching battle, they spent the intervening moments in making their wills, and in attending to the exercises of religion. The king himself took little repose. He visited the

different quarters of the army, sent, as soon as the moon arose, officers to examine the ground, arranged the operations of the next day, ordered bands of music to play in succession during the night, and before sunrise, summoned the men to attend to matins and mass. From prayer he led them into the field, and arrayed them after his usual manner in three divisions, and two wings; but so near to each other, that they seemed to form but one body. The archers, on whom he rested his principal hope, were placed in advance of the men-at-arms; their well-earned reputation in former battles, and their savage appearance on the present day, struck terror into their enemies. Many had stripped themselves naked; the others had bared their arms and breasts, that they might exercise their limbs with more ease and execution. Besides his bow and arrows, his battle-axe or sword, each bore the stake already mentioned, on his shoulder, which he was instructed to fix obliquely before him in the ground, and thus oppose a rampart of pikes to the charge of the French cavalry. The king himself appeared on a grey palfrey, followed by a train of led horses, ornamented with the most gorgeous trappings; his helmet was of polished steel, surmounted with a crown sparkling with jewels; and on his surcoat were emblazoned in gold, the arms of England and France. As he rode from banner to banner, cheering and exhorting the men, he chanced to hear an officer express a wish to his comrade, that some of the good knights, who were sitting idle in England, might by a miracle be transported to the field of battle.

‘No!’ exclaimed Henry, ‘I will not have a single man more. If God give us the victory, it will be plain that we owe it to His goodness. If He do not, the fewer we are, the less will be the loss to our country. But fight with your usual courage, and God, and the justice of our cause, will protect us. Before night the pride of our enemies shall be humbled in the dust; and the greater part of that multitude shall be stretched on the field, or captives in our power.’

The French were drawn up in the same order, with this fearful disparity in point of numbers, that while the English files were but four, their’s were thirty men deep. The constable himself commanded the first division, the Dukes of Par and Alençon the second, the Earls of Marle and Falconberg the third. The distance between the two armies scarcely exceeded a quarter of a mile, but the ground was wet and spongy, and D’Albret, faithful to his plan, ordered his men to sit down near their banners, and await in patience the advance of their enemy. Their inactivity disconcerted the king, who expected to be attacked. He improved the opportunity, however, to order a plentiful refreshment to be distributed through the ranks, while two detachments stole away unperceived by the French; of which one was instructed to lie in ambush in a meadow at Tamecourt, on their left flank; and the other to alarm them during the battle, by setting fire to the houses in the rear. Just as the king had made every preparation for the attack, he was surprised by the approach of three French knights, who demanded permission to speak with him. One of them was the

Baron de Helly, who had been a prisoner in England, and was said to have broken his parole. He took the opportunity to deny the charge, and offered to meet in single combat, between the two armies, whoever should dare to repeat it.

The king, who saw his object, instantly replied: 'This is not a time for single combats. Go, tell your countrymen to prepare for battle before night, and doubt not that for the violation of your word, you will a second time forfeit your liberty, if not your life.'

'Sir,' returned Helly, 'I shall receive no orders from you. Charles is our sovereign: him we obey: and for him we shall fight you, whenever we think proper.'

'Away, then,' resumed the king, 'and take care that we are not before you.' 'Immediately stepping forward, he exclaimed, 'Banners, advance!' At the same moment, Sir Thomas Erpingham threw his war-der into the air; and the men, falling on their knees bit the ground, arose, shouted, and ran towards the enemy.

At the distance of twenty paces, they halted to recover breath, and then repeated the shout. It was echoed back by the detachment in the meadow, which issuing from its concealment, instantly assailed the left flank of the French. At the same moment the archers, having planted their stakes ran before them, discharged their arrows, and retired behind their rampart. The constable had appointed a select battalion of eight hundred men-at-arms to break this formidable body. Of the whole number not more than seven score ever

came into action; these were quickly despatched; the others unable to face the incessant shower of arrows, turned their vizors aside, and lost the government of their horses, which, frantic with pain, plunged in different directions in the close ranks of the first division. It was a moment of irremediable confusion; nor did the archers lose the opportunity; flinging their bows behind them, and with their swords or battle-axes in their hands, they burst into the mass of the enemy, killing the constable and principal commanders, and in a short time totally dispersed the whole body.

Henry, who had followed with the men-at-arms, ordered the archers to form again, and immediately charge the second division. The Frenchmen, though the fate of their fellows had checked their presumption, met the shock with courage, and maintained for two hours a most bloody and doubtful contest. The king's life was repeatedly in imminent danger; seeing his brother, the Duke of Clarence, wounded and lying on the ground, he hastily strode across his body, and bravely repelled the efforts of the assailants, till the prince was safely removed by his own servants. Soon afterwards he was attacked by a band of eighteen French knights, who had bound themselves to each other to kill him or take him prisoner; one of them, with a stroke of his mace, brought the king on his knees, but he was instantly rescued by his guards, and his opponents were all slain. At length the Duke of Alençon, the French commander, fought his way to the royal commander; with one stroke he beat the Duke of York to the ground; with the second he cleaved the crown on the king's helmet;

every arm was instantly uplifted against him. The duke aware of his danger, exclaimed, 'I yield: I am Alençon.' Henry held out his hand; but his gallant enemy had already fallen. The death of the duke was followed by the flight of the survivors.

There still remained a third and most numerous division of the enemy; though displayed it was yet unbroken, and the English were preparing for the charge, when the alarming intelligence arrived that a powerful force approached the rear of the army. In this emergency, the king hastily gave orders that all the prisoners should be put to death; orders, which, in most instances, were unfortunately executed before the mistake could be discovered. The force, which had been so greatly magnified, consisted only of six hundred peasants under Robert de Boumouville, and Ysambert d'Agincourt, who had profited of the moment to enter Maisoncelles, plunder the baggage, and drive away the horses of the army. That this enterprise should prove so disastrous to their countrymen, they could not have foreseen; but they were afterwards called to account, and severely punished, by their immediate lord the Duke of Burgundy.

During this interval, the ranks of the third division began to waver; and their irresolution was augmented by the flames kindled in their rear by the English detachment. Of the whole number, no more than six hundred could be persuaded to follow their leaders, the Earls of Falconberg and Marle, who boldly rushed on the conquerors, and found, what they probably sought, captivity or an honoured death. The English were in

no condition to pursue the fugitives. As soon as resistance ceased, the king with his barons traversed the field, while the heralds examined the arms and numbered the bodies of the slain. He then called to him Mountjoy, the French king-at-arms, and asked him to whom the victory belonged.

‘To you, sir,’ replied Mountjoy.

‘And what,’ continued the king, ‘is that castle I see in the distance?’

‘It is called the Castle of Agincourt,’ was the answer.

‘Then,’ resumed Henry, ‘let this battle be known by the name of the Battle of Agincourt.’”

4. The British soldier is always remarkable for his absence of selfishness,—self-denial and the consideration of the wants of others before his own, are among his most beautiful characteristics in peace or war. Amongst the many tales I might bring forward, I select the famous one of Sir Philip Sydney in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, paralleled by many a tale of similar consideration on the hill of the Alma.

“Feeling perfectly secure, and keeping Reinberg still invested, Parma on the 22nd of September, 1586, detached a strong corps for the relief of Zutphen, and managed so that it should be reported in the English camp as consisting only of three hundred men and a convoy of provisions. Accordingly Sir Philip Sydney was directed, at the head of two hundred horse and three hundred foot to fall on the convoy by surprise, while Colonel Norrice with a strong reinforcement should support him in case of need.

It was the grey dawn of the morning when Sydney mounted his horse, accoutred with helmet, hawberk, dassets, and all the usual appointments of a man-at-arms. His troops were ready to move, when he observed that the marshal of the camp as if but anticipating a slight resistance, had taken his place in half armour, that is to say, with his lower extremities undefended. Whether it was the spirit of emulation actuated him, or that he partook of the over-confidence with which his companion seemed to be embued, we have no means of determining; but, with some light yet manly joke he pulled off his cuisses and so rode forward unprotected upon the thighs. It was a misty morning, the clouds overshadowed all the plain, so that no man could see a yard before him; and the first intimation which the English received of the enemy was given when the leading files of the two columns suddenly encountered. There was a fierce onset, and much display of personal gallantry, during which the English seemed at first to carry all before them; but the mists clearing away it was found that not only three hundred horse but three thousand foot, principally musketeers, were opposed to them; and that the latter having been placed in ambush among ditches and broken ground, could work great ill to the assailants almost with impunity. A shot struck Sir Philip Sydney's horse and killed it; he mounted another, and was playing the part of a brave cavalier when a second ball took effect just above the knee, and pain and great weakness from loss of blood compelled him, by and by, to go to the rear; in which sad progress, says Lord Brooke,

passing along by the rest of the army where his uncle the general was, and being thirsty with excess of bleeding he called for drink, which was presently brought him, but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth he saw a poor soldier who had been wounded at the same time ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle, which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head before he drank and delivered it to the poor man with these words, 'Thy necessity is greater than mine.' From the effects of this wound Sydney never recovered, the ball had broken the bone and could not be extracted; and the art of surgery being then in its infancy mortification came on, and at the end of sixteen days of much suffering he expired. His death was in every respect worthy of his life,—calm, peaceful, resigned, as a Christian soldier's ought to be." But it was not for the sake of doing honour to the individual, either then or previously, that we ventured to give this sketch.

5. We need not go far to see instances of the next attribute of the British soldier—desperate courage. I will take one glorious case of it from the late war, in the conduct of the 55th, in the battle of Vimiero.

"The first great battle in which the relative merits of the French and English soldier were tested in the Peninsula, was fought at Vimiero, a village distant from Torres Vedras about nine miles, and something less than one mile from the sea. It began about eight o'clock in the morning of the 21st of August, 1808, and continued with much obstinacy and great mutual slaughter till noon,—the numbers engaged, or held in reserve on both sides were very nearly equal, perhaps

the superiority, if some raw Portuguese levies be taken into account, was on the side of the English; still it was not so great but that the advantages secured by it may be said to have been compensated by the greater experience of the French in war; and the prestige of an uninterrupted career of success which belonged to them. The French were the assailants, they delivered their first and fiercest attack on the left of the English line, where the 50th regiment, under the command of Colonel afterwards General Sir George Walker, was posted, and were received with a fire at half pistol shot distance, which staggered and shook them ere they could deploy into line. This was instantly followed by a charge, the 50th pressing upon their front and overlapping both flanks of the shattered column forced them back in a confused mass towards a pine wood, and then a signal of recall being sounded, with the greatest coolness and in excellent order resumed its place in the line; but the regiment had not reposed many minutes ere a renewed call was made upon its hardihood, three weak squadrons of British cavalry, led on by Colonel Taylor, had dashed among the distributed French infantry and cut them down with terrible slaughter, till they in their turn, were suddenly charged by thrice their number of French horse, and driven back. During this their retreat they got entangled in a sort of fold, surrounded by lofty walls, and presenting but a single aperture, that by which they had entered. It was instantly seized by the enemy; and powerless either to fight or to flee, these brave men felt themselves in the condition of a tiger which has fallen into

a pit. At this critical moment the eagle eye of Colonel Walker detected the danger of their position.—He saw likewise how alone they could be delivered from it; he waved his hat, led his regiment forward at the double, and fell with a loud shout upon the blockading masses. The doorway of the fold was soon cleared, forth rode the liberated cavalry, striking at the right and left as they passed, while the gallant 50th cheered them in token of their mutual triumph, and calmly returned to the brow of the hill.”

It was a magnificent exploit, the liberation of these squadrons, and deserves the praise which both from friends and foes was that day liberally heaped upon it.

6. But the next striking attribute of the British soldier is his devotion to his sovereign. The monarch is the power to which the Bible refers when it bids us to honour the king; but it may also be taken to represent the idea of loyalty; that is, submission to the king, is submission to that individual who represents all that the nation holds honourable and dear.—The Christian religion—our domestic life—our free institutions—our vast machinery, and protected insular position—the respect with which England peculiarly regards the ties of marriage and family—and that noble-minded generosity which leads a nation at once to pity and relieve the widows and orphans of her servants, may be considered as expressed in the idea of loyalty. When you fight for the king you fight for that—when you forget yourself for the sovereign you sacrifice self on that altar.

There are many tales of devotion to the king brilliant on the pages of history, but few more striking than the

following story of Lord Strafford's devotion to the unhappy Charles I., so ill requited and so little valued, —You, who fight the battles of your country to-day, have already had proof that the Queen, for whom you fight, regards your services and sufferings.

“While Charles was struggling as to how to act with regard to Strafford's sentence, he received a letter from Strafford, intreating him, for the sake of averting further calamities to the king himself, for the sake of public peace, to put an end to the innocent life of his unhappy servant, and thus to quiet the tumultuous people by granting them that request for which they were so clamorous. ‘In this,’ added he, ‘my consent will more acquit you to God than all the world can do beside; to a willing man there is no injury. And as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world with a calmness and meekness of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul, so to you, sir, I can resign the life of this world with all imaginable cheerfulness in the just acknowledgment of your exceeding favours.’

This illustrious effort of disinterestedness, worthy of the noble mind of Strafford, and equal to any generosity recorded in the annals of mankind, was ill rewarded by Charles, who, after a little more hesitation, as if his scruples had been more of the religious kind, granted a commission to four noblemen to give the royal assent, in his name, to the bill. These commissioners were empowered, at the same time, to give assent to a bill, that the parliament then sitting should not be dissolved, prorogued, or adjourned, without the consent of the majority of the members.

The king might still have saved his minister by granting him a reprieve, but that was not thought advisable, while the minds of men were in such agitation. He sent, however, by the hands of the Prince of Wales, a letter addressed to the peers, in which he intreated them to confer with the commons about a mitigation of the prisoner's sentence, or at least to procure some delay. Both requests were rejected; and Strafford, finding his fate inevitable, prepared to meet death with the same dignity with which he had lived. In those awful moments of approaching dissolution, though neither cheered by that ray of popular immortality which beams upon the soul of the expiring patriot nor consoled by the affectionate sorrow of the spectators, his erect mind found resources within itself; and supported by the consciousness of integrity, maintained its unbroken resolution amidst the terrors of death and the triumphant exultations of his vindictive enemies. His discourse, and also his deportment on the scaffold, disclosed equal composure and courage—"The shedding of innocent blood," said he, "as a propitiatory sacrifice, is a bad omen, I fear, of the intended reformation of the state," and on preparing himself for the block, he made this memorable declaration: "I thank God I am no way afraid of death, nor daunted by any terrors, but do cheerfully lay down my head at this time, as I ever did when going to repose!" He accordingly submitted to his doom, and was beheaded at one blow."

7. It is the peculiar attribute of the army and the navy that their members at an early age devote themselves to their country's service. We have, already, learnt in

the bloody battle which has been fought in the Crimea, how a youth, whose dream of life was but at the beginning, could lie down and die without complaint when his country and his duty called him, and the scythe of war had severed the brittle stem of his as yet unblossomed manhood. Wolfe's glorious death under the walls of Quebec, and his memorable dying words: "I die content at thirty-three," is a noble instance of this attribute.

"As soon as it fell dark, the boats of the fleet took the troops on board, and dropped down quietly with the current; and so well was the matter managed, that about midnight the first brigade was on shore at Wolfe's Cove, and the rest pouring on with great rapidity.

The Cove in question lies under a precipitous bank of about 250 feet in height, up the face of which there runs a steep pathway, where no more than four men can walk abreast. It was no secret, moreover, in the British army, that on the summit was a redoubt, armed with four guns, and that a picquet of infantry kept watch there, though, as the result proved, not very diligently. The utmost silence prevailed below till the leading sections having won the ascent, sprang upon the French guard, put the men to the bayonet, and made themselves masters without any loss of the redoubt. Then marched the regiments upwards as rapidly as the nature of the ground would allow, so that soon after dawn the whole were on the heights of Abraham, and formed in line of battle within three-quarters of a mile of the upper town.

It was long ere Montcalm received intelligence of the event which had befallen. He instantly broke up from his lines beside the Montmorency and marching through Québec, hurried out to decide in the field with whom the sovereignty of the Canadas should thenceforth abide. Wolfe's little army, consisting of no more than ten battalions, or something less than five thousand men, was drawn up in two lines, with its right on the precipitous bank of the St. Lawrence, and its left, to use a military expression, 'in the air.' There was but one piece of light artillery in the field, and not a horse except the few—somewhere about eight—on which the general and personal staff were mounted. Montcalm, on the other hand, led against them upwards of eight thousand Infantry, besides a swarm of Indians, and as many pieces of cannon as he had means at his command to transport. The odds were therefore sorely against the invaders; but their own courage, and the excellent disposition of their leader, more than made amends for this inferiority, and a brilliant triumph attended their exertions, though too dearly purchased by the fall of their chief.

The battle of Quebec began about eleven o'clock in the forenoon on the 13th of September, by a furious attack on the part of the French on the right of the British line, which they masked by a heavy fire of skirmishers and cannon along the left and centre. It was bravely met, and repulsed, whereupon Montcalm marching a heavy column to the English left fell upon it stoutly and compelled the battalions stationed there to form *en potence*, that is, in two faces of a square. But

no better success attended him here. His column shattered by the fire of the British troops, reeled, and gave ground, whereupon Wolfe, seeing that the critical moment was come, rode along his line and gave the word to charge. He had scarcely done so, when within the space of two minutes, three balls struck him, one in the wrist, one in the abdomen, and a third in the chest; the last of which rolled him from his horse, and he was carried by a couple of grenadiers to the rear. He lived long enough to be told that the enemy were flying in great confusion, and with the expression on his lips, 'I die content,' he, at the early age of thirty-three expired."

Such are some of the attributes which have adorned the British soldier in days gone by, and whatever those soldiers have been, they should still be, while our nation hopes to hold her station among the kingdoms of the earth. These are the gifts of character, and the exploits which preceding ages have given down as heir-looms to posterity, and to the soldier of '55, and while these are borrowed from the past, there are new and still more glorious attributes which *we* have to show forth, express, and deliver down to coming days.

The increase of religious knowledge; the advance of the influence of the Church; the teaching of our Sunday Schools and frequent services, are the advantages which the soldier of '55 has over other ages; and with them the stern *reality* of the need of preparation for death instead of viewing it as a matter of *possible* necessity. The forms of our warriors which lie wrapped in their military cloaks for their shroud on the hill side of the Crimea teach those who follow them in 1855.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WIDOW.

THE widow returned from the lecture ; she had not taken away much of it ; she was not one whose virtue lay in that direction. She had gone because Cicely Loraine asked her, and she was grateful to Cicely for many a kindness and a word of sympathy. She had sat through it, gazing chiefly at the great lamp which hung from the ceiling, and counting the several glasses, though at the end she knew no more how many there were than she did at the beginning. She had sometimes looked suddenly at the lecturer when a sentence, which brought Allen to her mind, recalled her wandering sense : how Sir Philip Sidney gave water to the thirsty soldier, and how Wolfe said he was content to die young. The awful tale of Alma had left a deep line graven on her memory ; and the stories of burning thirst and the crying for water had remained with sad force upon her recollection ; still, she had firm good sense, and more than that, deep and trustful religion, and she implicitly believed that God would protect Allen in the scene of war and peril. She had very little interest in the principle of the war or in the theoretic view of bloody battles. Why the war was ; the need of ousting Russia ; the Western Alliance ; the importance of the Crimea, were sentences expressive of ideas for which she cared very little. Allen, her only son, was in the war, that was enough, and she cared for little else.

She had ever been like that. Her husband married her for her quiet, gentle ways, and her unobtrusive modesty. But he never could get her to take pleasure in passing literature or subjects of general interest; and if she did seem engaged in the characters of Scott's Novels when he read them to her in the evening, it was always *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth* she liked best; and, though she never owned it, she had an inward preference for the *Black Dwarf*. She tried, though it was very difficult, to think that there was something very grand in the *Antiquary* and *S. Ronan's Well*. Yet she used to sit for hours in the evening when the curtains were drawn, hemming her little Allen's frocks and listening in her calm, quiet way to her husband's voice, sometimes giving a slight sigh, as she gazed a minute vacantly into the fire, and laid down the frock to put the border on the cap.

Once, poor thing, when Allen was growing up, she had a sudden idea seize her mind to try if she could not interest him in the same intellectual pleasures which she always had felt her husband had been disappointed with her in not enjoying. For days the idea haunted her, owing to her having a bright and vivid recollection of something very graphic and entertaining in *Marmion*.

One afternoon, when her husband was out, she called Allen with a light and happy voice, and said "she had something so interesting to read to him." She got down "*Marmion*," while Allen sat on a stool before the fire, with his hands on his knees, waiting in happy expectation. But he waited long—she looked

in vain through page after page. But where the vivid scene was she could not tell. She stopped at the Battle and Clara. But no! it had no special interest to engage Allen or even herself. She began to read in three separate places; but none seemed to answer *her* expectation, or Allen's hopes; she had the impression of some general interest which no one scene realised; and she laid down the book in quiet disappointment, and told Allen "to go and play, she would read to him another day."

She had forgotten that we sometimes get general impressions of pleasure in a book when scene succeeds scene, or some well-known voice reads them; which, when we come to read them for ourselves, fleet like a dream from our grasp. She clung so to her husband for every thing, and her feeling was, "When he is dead, I shall go with him down to the grave, for I cannot surely live without him. How can I pull through life alone with that child?" But he did die, and she, to the surprise of all, was calm and still; and did pursue her walk along the path of life neither more quickly nor slowly, with Allen by her side.

Such was the widow; and she it was whom Cicely made to come to the lecture, and she had gone as she had been bidden; though she had in herself her own little world of thoughts and ideas which moved and acted as separately from the world outside and Cicely Loraine, as clouds move silently along independently of the objects of the world over which they pass.

It was the morning after the lecture that the widow

was sitting by herself at breakfast, a meal which never occupied much time with her, for lonely as she was, she always found something to do and to be busy about. The detail and catalogue of her daily work was kept with full accuracy by Peggy Tomkins, whose round face and sharp eye might often be seen peering over the window curtains to watch what the widow was about, with that baby on her arm who clung to Peggy as pertinaciously, yet just as unlike her, as a bough of mistletoe to an apple tree. Well, to return ;—the morning after the lecture she was sitting at breakfast, and the postman came. Letters seldom came to her, for she had few to write to her. But this morning, whether the lecture had made her nervous, or what not, she turned very pale as she put the cup down, and grew somewhat short of breath as the door opened, and the maid laid two letters beside her. Both had foreign postmarks, and both were from the Crimea. She opened Allen's first. She had heard from him twice since Alma, in both of which he had made light of a wound which he had received in the skirmish.

It was with rather more expression of feeling than usual that the widow opened the first letter, which was in the handwriting of her son. It ran thus :—

“ My dearest Mother,

“ The wound I received at the battle of Alma, though in itself slight, has taken a greater effect on my constitution than I at first imagined. I have been compelled for the last few days to lay by in the tem-

porary hospital at Balaklava. I have all the kindness and attention shown me which the circumstances of the case admit of, but in the many hours of solitude I have to spend my heart continually yearns after you, and my mind goes back to those days of illness in my boyhood when you were so much to me. Do not be anxious about me, my dearest mother, but I thought I ought to let you know how I was. May God bless you.

"Your own

"ALLEN."

The widow with a trembling hand laid the letter on the table. She knew her son's nature too well, as she had that of her husband who was dead, not to feel very anxious. She felt sure that that letter described but one third of the truth; and she gazed four or five times at the direction on the envelope which lay still unopened before her. At length quietly saying, "God's blessed will be done," she took it up, and broke the seal.

The handwriting was a strange one to her, but a boding told her already what its contents would be. It ran as follows :—

"Madam,

"Having for some days past been in attendance on your son at the hospital at Balaklava; and having had reason, as all must, to admire his heroism in the field, and his patience in sickness; I take the liberty of writing to you, to assure you that he lies in a precarious state, and to prepare your mind for the possible intelligence that the next post may bring you. I know

his own consideration for the feelings of others so well, that I fear lest he may not have prepared you for the result.

“I remain, Madam,

“With sincere respect and sympathy,

“Yours, &c.”

The widow remained for a few moments lost in thought, and then suddenly rising with the words, “I knew how it was,” she took out her Bible, which for years had been her resort in the moments of difficulty or trouble, and kneeling down, besought the teaching of God in her extreme anguish.

A view had taken hold of her mind, and on that view she had formed a rapid resolution—if indeed we may call it a rapid resolution, when from the moment that Allen had departed, she had constantly had the idea before her mind, sleeping or waking.—“If anything happens to him I will go to him.”

It was perfectly consistent with the small compass of her intellectual powers, and her apparent weakness in some respect to form firm and decided resolves, and to act upon them with a vigour which few could emulate.

And perhaps this view may account a little for the way in which she issued from her lodging within an hour of the receipt of the letter, having cheerfully given orders for the breakfast to be removed, leaving an impression on the mind of the landlady that the widow had received better news than usual in the letter which the post had brought her.

She turned her footsteps towards the hall; for her

first resolve had been to commit to Cicely Loraine her secret resolution, and to confer with her upon its execution.

She was not mistaken ; though, perhaps, she had a somewhat overweening estimation for Cicely. She was quite right in respecting at a very high rate her intelligence and sound common sense, as well as her full disposition to sympathise with any resolution which involved vigour of purpose, or unselfish exertion for the sake of others.

Cicely was sitting, writing, in her own room when the servant announced Mrs. Childers.

The reader may be surprised at the frequent mention of Miss Loraine's writing. It is worthy of remark in passing, that every one who knew her was equally astonished at her ready use of the pen. Her large, round, black handwriting was familiar to at least six and twenty unmarried friends, and twenty married ladies who still corresponded with Cicely. In fact, she loved writing notes.

She rose on the entrance of the widow, whose small figure, shadowed by her weeds, with a quick and rather nervous motion advanced to take the proffered hand. The widow spoke in her own quiet undertone of voice, which while it betokened a retiring and unobtrusive character, at the same time expressed a firmness of purpose and will which left no opening for contempt or opposition from others. She was one, however moderate may have been her intellectual powers or energies, who had made up for the lack of them by keeping long terms in the school of adversity. Her vacations

had been short ; she had sedulously applied herself to her lesson, and, if she were not clever, at least in that school she had become cultivated. So long had those terms of her life-education been, that away from school she was out of place. She was like one who could play but one tune ; that tune was very sweet, but very monotonous. It sometimes varied a little in its expression as the finger which passed over the chords was actuated by a mind a little more or a little less excited, but the tune was ever the same. It was not one of heroism, or of martyrdom, or of conscious melancholy ; it had in it none of the plaintive wailings of pleasurable sorrow. It did not seem to come from a heart which exactly knew the meaning or depth of its own impulses, and yet her life-tune was one which called from the listener deep emotion ; like the songs we have read of of that sweet bird, which, being blinded, sings upon the spray to the passing traveller unconscious songs, really but the continuation of the old instinct of life, though they seem to the hearer like melancholy dirges for the blue sky or the green field which the songster may never see again.

"I don't know how it is," Jessy used to say, "there is no one ever touches me so much as Mrs. Childers, she does so interest me."

"Well," Cicely used to say, in her decided, yet not unfeminine voice, "I cannot imagine what you mean ; Mrs. Childers always appears to me the most ordinary person I know ; to be sure I feel very much for her circumstances, but she does not seem to feel them much herself, so that I do not see why I should feel

them for her—they appear to sit quietly and lightly upon her.”

“There is the very point,” Jessy used to think to herself; but she did not say it aloud, because she did not feel sure that that was the thing which struck her so much in the widow.

Peggy Tomkins always said, that “Mrs. Childers was the unkedest lady she ever saw.”

But never mind, it matters little whether Jessy, Cicely or Peggy were right—this at least was true, that the end of the widow’s tune was duty.

“I come, Miss Loraine,” said Mrs. Childers, “to ask your advice on a plan I have been thinking of. I should not quite like to act without advice, and I feel your good sense and kindness will direct and excuse me. I have a strong wish to go to the Crimea; Allen is wounded, and I do not know why I should not nurse him, being his mother.”

There was a slight tremulousness in the utterance of the last word. The widow paused.

“To the Crimea?” said Cicely, “impossible! Why, my dear Mrs. Childers, you never could bear the journey. You seem anything but strong, and papa is always astonished to see you at church as you are this winter weather.”

“I do not fear that,” said the widow, smiling. “I believe I can bear the difficulties of a journey as well as most people, even though I may sometimes find it difficult to bear half an hour of a November fog. I have gone through a great deal of that kind. But that was not quite the point I came to speak to you about; I

think I have made up my mind to that—the question with me was rather how I was to go. You see, Miss Loraine, I have no means of my own, and if I were to sell the little furniture I have, it might break up the home to which my boy may return. No; I came to ask your opinion as to whether you did not think I could work my way out?”

“Work your way out?” said Cicely in astonishment. “Why, my dear Mrs. Childers, it’s like reading a chapter in *Don Quixote*.”

And as Miss Loraine spoke, her eyes sparkled with their peculiarly intelligent vivacity, as she passed her fingers down the chain which hung round her neck, and played with the pendant ornaments suspended from it.

“No, I really mean what I say,” said Mrs. Childers, who had once heard her husband read *Don Quixote*, but had never got a very much deeper view of it than that of a tall lean man charging full tilt at a windmill. She had read no moral in the tale, and could not for the instant quite think what Cicely could mean. “What I was thinking of, Miss Loraine, was going out as a nurse to the wounded, as I hear some are sent out free of expense.”

“Admirable!” said Cicely, “capital! no, you shall go out as a Sister of Charity. Why, my dear Mrs. Childers, you will look beautiful; I can just fancy you wearing one of those white caps which they wear abroad. Well, really it is a very practical and sensible view. I am charmed with it. Oh yes, as far as I can see, I shall give my full advice in favour of it. I should

like to talk to papa ; and then you can carry out a great box of worsted gloves and warm things to Leonard. Dear me, you will be another S. Elizabeth of Hungary. I always said you were like some such person."

By this time Cicely had risen, and was proceeding to put on her very neat and quiet straw bonnet.

"I must go and find papa directly, he must come and talk to you, my dear Mrs. Childers, he will give you admirable advice. Dear me ! how delighted your son will be to see you ! Would you mind staying half an hour here while I find papa, he is in the village ?"

"Thank you," said Mrs. Childers, rising, "I should very much like to see Mr. Loraine, but I think I shall go across to the parsonage and see Miss Seymour, and return in half an hour, as I want to speak to her. I am so glad, Miss Loraine, you like my scheme."

"Like it ? Why it is perfectly admirable ! charming !" said Cicely. "You will see the site of the Alma, and the camp at Balaklava and Sebastopol ; and perhaps be there at the assault ; and then you will be so eminently useful ; it must be so delightful to be mixed up with the events that are going on—to be one of the people of whom every one is talking and thinking. I must make haste ; and do, my dear Mrs. Childers, be back within the half hour."

And Cicely was gone. And Mrs. Childers took her quiet way through the path to the parsonage.

"I do not know," she said to herself, "I do not think I am going for any of the reasons Miss Loraine spoke of. But it is very clear that her judgment is quite

with my going at all, and that is very satisfactory. My dear husband always used to say that I never cared to feel my own importance enough ; and he was generally right. But I don't know, I feel it rather difficult to be glad to be one of those, whom every one is talking about."

But she had rung the bell at the parsonage, and the servant had said, Miss Seymour was at home.

Jessy was in her room ; her habits were retiring ; too much so. It was not quite that she loved to brood over the idols of pensiveness, for what she did was very unconscious to herself ; but she *did* brood over the sadder things of life with a kind of preference. She did not, as many do, form into a definite idolatry, the melancholy, or the unhappy. She did not say in a distressed tone of voice, "Oh, how I love the *Corsair* ; I do so delight in Mrs. Hemans : I hate cheerful poetry." But she did love things of that kind. Leonard in the strength of his boyish passion used sometimes softly to open the door of the drawing-room in the rectory, where Jessy was sitting at the piano, while the window stood wide open to the sunny lawn, through which the hot west wind of the August afternoon was swelling out the large muslin curtains with their blue border, like the sails of some fairy fleet upon a dreamy sea, and then Jessy ever was playing some tune sad and soft and low. Or, while her eyes were gazing almost listlessly and vacantly on the roses, which knocked gently on the window-pane, she sang songs so pensively sad, that even down Leonard's manly cheek the unresisted tear would find its way, as he

leant with his head against the door gazing on the lovely object of his youthful dream.

And when she had finished her calm monotony and still kept gazing at the roses—or at nothingness, and Leonard would try to check his beating heart, or suppress his breath lest he should dispel the visionary scene, she would turn and see him; and then those universal words would come, “Oh, Leonard, is it you?” Words which meant a thousand things by tone, by manner, and by look. And he would almost madly rush towards her. Then it was in scenes like that that Jessy showed that if she did not embody into conscious forms the pensive thoughts of life, she did pursue unwittingly their fleeting forms.

But we are wandering.—When the widow entered, Jessy was sitting back in her low leather arm chair, while her finger was playing with one of her long curls as she was reading a book with close attention. On the table there stood a small vase which held a plant of jessamine, her own flower; it was white jessamine, though now, of course, it showed no signs of verdure.

“Why my dear girl loved it so, I never quite knew,” Mr. Seymour used in after days to say, “either it was that there was some singular similarity between her character and the idea of that gentle flower; or it may have been that last September, when Jessy was going to an evening party at the hall, Leonard, who had come in a little while before, gathered all the blossoms from the small tree, and wove them into a slender crown round Jessy’s head. And the pale loving blos-

soms lay so beautifully intermingled with her golden hair, that even Cicely went so far that evening as to stop and say to Leonard, 'I never saw Jessy look so lovely.' And from that day Leonard took such an interest in that jessamine tree, that Jessy ever connected it with him."

Oh what cannot woman's love realize!

"Dear Mrs. Childers!" said Jessy, throwing down her book, and her face lighting with smiles as she moved quickly towards the widow, "I am so glad to see you."

"I came to tell you, Miss Seymour," said her visitor with her usual old fashioned and stiff courtesy of manner, "of a plan that I have just determined on, in which I thought I might be of some use to you. I am going to the Crimea," continued she, without altering a tone of her voice, or moving a line of her countenance.

"Going to the Crimea!" said Jessy, "oh *do* take me with you."

The earnestness of her manner, the melting power which seemed to beam from her eye—that faithful mirror of the inward soul—her clasped hands, and the almost wild tone of her voice startled the widow out of her usual composure.

"I hope I said nothing to offend, Miss Seymour?" said Mrs. Childers, clearing her throat, and showing an excitement of manner which was so unusual to her, that it implied that she was alarmed at what she had done.

But without answering, Jessy had sunk back again

into her chair, with her hands still clasped, and her eyes gazing vacantly through the window.

"Ah no," said she, as if talking to herself, "how wild and foolish all this is; and yet what would I not give to go! Oh when will this restless heart be still?" And then as if suddenly recollecting herself, she turned round and laid her hand on Mrs. Childers' arm, and smiling said, "Do forgive me, dear Mrs. Childers, I do not know what you must think of me; you must think I am mad. Your saying that you were going to the Crimea did so strike me at the instant, for you know I am always dreaming of how I can go there. I often sit and wonder whether, if I were one of those little birds that peek upon the turf, my wing would get tired if I flew there. Is it not foolish? Oh how Cicely would scold me if she were here. But do tell me now all about it; it is so selfish in me to be thinking of myself directly."

Mrs. Childers, who by this time had recovered her composure, did tell her whole plan, and ended by saying, "and if, Miss Seymour, you should have any communication to make through me to Mr. Loraine, I shall be so glad to be of any service to you."

"And do you think you will see *him* there?" her voice for a moment resuming something of the former tone.

"Well! I suppose I shall if I were to try," said Mrs. Childers. "My son is at Balaklava, and I suppose Mr. Loraine is somewhere between that and Sebastopol; anyhow I will do what I can."

"O thank you, thank you, good, kind Mrs. Childers,

it is so like you. I do hope that your son is not badly wounded. How happy he will be to have you come and nurse him. I do hope that if Leonard should be wounded at all severely, if you should have a little time to spare, you would think of him."

"Oh indeed I would," said Mrs. Childers; "indeed I would."

"There is another thing," said Jessy, after a minute's silence, "which I did want to say," and she buried her face in her hands, and seemed undergoing some strong emotion, "ah well, it is very foolish," and as she spoke she caught up a letter from the table and examined the post mark.

"You see, Mrs. Childers, it is this. I have not had a letter. Oh such a very long time it seems; it is much longer than usual; he might be wounded or ill, but I know he is not that, because,"—and here her voice faltered—"because you know—Cicely *did* have a letter from him last week, and—and—I, I, you know—have not heard for nine days." And she gazed vacantly on the letter and paused.

The widow, with all her punctilious and old fashioned manner, knew many lessons of the human heart, and in a moment read the woe that was working there. With the deepest kindness in her voice, she said, "Dear Miss Seymour, you know so many things might happen by way of accident to letters."

"Oh yes, yes!" said Jessy, pressing her hand against her forehead. "Oh how wicked I am! I know how dearly Leonard loves me, and yet, and yet—but oh, who ever read a letter like this?" and she took from

her bosom one which had been treasured there, and looked upon its already worn surface with an eye more than moist. But it did not escape the widow's observation, nor perhaps yours, good reader, to wonder, or perhaps not to wonder, why the letter which she took from her bosom was evidently of an older date than the one that lay upon the table. It was one in fact over whose melting sentences of love, soon after Leonard had left her, she had wept and smiled, and meditated by the passing hour. And though she did not know it as a formed thought, poor girl, the later letters had a little faded off into something she knew not what—"for of course he would tell me about the landing, and the Cossacks, and the splendid look of the men, and the Alma, and the heroes of the 23rd, what was more natural?" Still what cared Jessy for all the battles, and all the heroes?

As she read the glowing stories, her eye would anticipate the coming sentence on the bottom of the page, to see whether there were those words coming presently, which in that tenant of her warm breast had come so often, "*My own, my precious Jessy.*" Yet no, they did not come; "and yet, you know," she said, as she turned to the widow, as if finishing a sentence, though she had begun it only in her own mind, "and yet, you know, oh Leonard does so love me!"

Ay, Jessy Seymour, if you fully felt that, you would not say it. Words ever come to swell the lagging sail of windless feeling. They come to fill the vacuum, the husk of love.

But the widow rose to go, and Jessy again was

alone. She had given utterance to something which she felt she had never owned before. But the burdened heart must drop its load somewhere in life's brief journey. And if, gentle reader, participating in the widow's thought, as she walked home along the lane and said to herself, "Ah, it's a pity the young soldier is more taken up now with the battle than with love; but it is the way of men, and especially with youth," I say, reader, if that is your conviction, and if leaving the widow you turn and look through that little window at the parsonage, and see Jessy still sitting after a long half hour in the same place gazing with those speaking eyes upon the same worn letter, and then restore it to her bosom as one would some frightened bird, whose affection we long to make our own by rescuing it from destruction; if seeing that and hearing her gentle sigh as she did it, you shall be inclined to blame Leonard Loraine,—stay a moment. Remember *he* was after all a youth with a youth's fleeting transient feelings, drawing the honeyed drops of life's excitement from a hundred glittering flowers; one to whom the blossom on which he first rested may be a little paled in power by those which have so rapidly succeeded it. While *she* was one whose clinging soul once having rested on the flower of its early choice knew no change; and would cling there till each pale petal dropped and died; and then would sepulchre herself in their dust.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DINNER PARTY.

"My dear," said Mrs. Loraine to her husband, one morning not very long after the news of the battle of Inkermann had reached England, "I think we ought not to neglect the calls of hospitality. There are several persons whom we ought to ask to dinner."

"I have no objection, my dear," said Mr. Loraine. "I am not quite sure what every one might think. I have heard some people express an opinion that during a state of war like the present, which involves the deaths of so many of our countrymen, the usual attentions of that kind should be suspended."

"My dear papa," said Cicely, laying down her pen on the table, and with her head bent forward looking at her parents, "my dear papa, what can such people mean? where can the harm possibly be of social intercourse, merely because an army is engaged in honourable war? It does seem to me——"

"My dear Cicely," said her father, "I see no sort of objection to your mother's proposal," and he sank back with his usual air of indifferentism into his armchair, and took up the Quarterly and a paperknife; for there was nothing he dreaded equal to a discussion with Cicely. He cleared his throat, and was soon deep in an article, though he looked for a moment over the top of his book at his wife, and said, "Pray, my dear, make any arrangements you please, I shall only be too happy ;

all I bargain for is that you ask the Hibberts, and that you do *not* ask Mr. Tavistock."

"My dear papa," said Cicely, laying down her pen again, "it is quite impossible to do otherwise than to ask him, because ——"

"Very well, my dear, anything your mother likes," said Mr. Loraine sinking again into his *article*, and frowning with a dissatisfied air; and again clearing his throat he was soon only a matter of consciousness to his two companions by the fringe of his iron grey hair and whiskers which surrounded the edges of the magazine, and his feet which were stretched on the rug.

"Cicely, my love, will you make a list of the names of those we should ask?" said Mrs. Loraine, rising and standing on the rug.

"Delighted, dear mamma," said Cicely, taking up her pen and paper with energy.

"Sir John and Lady Hibbert; Mr. and Mrs. George Brown; Lady Burgoyne; Mr. and Mrs. Tattler, Miss Tattler, and Miss Emily Tattler; Mr. and Mrs. Bathurst, the Rector of the next parish; Miss Peggs, and Mr. Philpot; and, of course, dear Mr. Seymour and Jessy; though, I suppose, Jessy will not come," said Mrs. Loraine, looking out of the window.

"Dear mamma, why not?" said Cicely. "It is such a pity that Jessy gives way to these weak feelings."

"Here, you old humbug," cried Maxwell, bursting into the room, "there's one of your beastly old women wants you in the hall," said he going up to Cicely and laying his hand with no soft touch upon her shoulder.

"Maxwell!" said Mrs. Loraine, "I cannot have such language as that even in a joke."

"Very well, dear mamma, I won't," said Maxwell going up to his mother, and coaxingly putting her arm round his own neck, "only Cicely is such an old ——"

"Maxwell!" said his mother.

"O well," said Maxwell, stamping his foot upon the rug, and pushing his face against his mother's arm. "Jessy's worth a thousand of Cicely, that's what I think. Leonard is a lucky dog."

"Maxwell, I wish you would not disturb us so," said Cicely. "I wish you would go back again to the stables."

"Yes, do, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "we are busy."

"Oh, how I hate girls and sisters," said Maxwell, bursting out of the room. "I will go and bully Alice, see if I won't."

The door closed, and before half a minute had gone, a cry from a distant part of the house told that the work had begun.

"Oh, Maxwell, you horrid boy." But the sound suddenly ceased, and the loud slamming of a door left the occupants of the drawing-room to picture the forlorn fate of the unfortunate captive in the hands of her brother.

"Cicely, my dear, how many have you got?"

"Fifteen, dear mamma."

"Well, we ought to ask Mr. Cruttenden," said Mrs. Loraine.

"Oh, but, mamma, he is so tiresome," said Cicely.

"My dear," said Mr. Loraine, putting his Quarterly

on his knee, and looking up with a frown, as if vexed at having to appear to care about who was asked, "we must ask Captain Bailey; I promised Hibbert I would; and besides he is just fresh from the Crimea, and he will talk." And he went on with the Review.

"Seventeen, mamma."

"That will do, my love," said Mrs. Loraine, "they will not all come."

And the invitations were written, sent, and answered.

The Hibberts could come; Mr. Cruttenden was delighted; the George Browns had had a nephew at the battle of Alma, and wished very much to accept the invitation, but regretted exceedingly that they did not know whether he was dead or alive, and so were obliged to say "no." The Bathursts, Miss Peggs, Mr. Philpot would all come. Captain Bailey could, and the Tattlers; but Lady Burgoyne, who did not wish to go because she hated Lady Hibbert, had lost a second cousin on the heights of the Alma, and therefore she could not dine out this winter.

"Well, did you ever hear anything so absurd," said Cicely, as she put down Lady Burgoyne's note, but no one replied to her except Maxwell.

"There you are again now, Cicely, always thinking every body must think just as you do."

"Maxwell," said Cicely, and Maxwell was quiet. Such were the acceptances and the refusals except—But stop—

"Jessy, my dear," said the good old rector, as the winter sunbeam was playing on the breakfast table

through the study window, and the simple china with pale pink spots stood arranged in its old accustomed way on the cheerful cloth. Round the snug little room large and highly polished mahogany bookcases with glass doors held the rector's ample library of divines, classics, and historians; all bound nearly alike in dingy brown and faded gilt; except "Clarke's Travels," which were bound in reddish Russian leather. Leaves of ivy were rustling against the window; and inside a high green stand filled with moss stood shining with pink hypanthias, forced violets, and winter roses, on which the sickly sunbeam was resting with delight at finding something on the raw morning which it could call its own.

There were a few engravings round the room in sombre black frames: a view of Winchester College and New College; a portrait of Bishop Wilson, and Bishop Ken, and William of Wykeham; a figure of George III. walking in his garden; and a water-coloured drawing of the parish Church which a sickly nephew of Mr. Seymour's had done some time ago when spending a few days at the rectory.

Besides these there was a portrait of Dante with that strange night-cap of his. This was out of keeping with the room, and the good rector never liked it. But Jessy wished it. She had a sort of fancy about Dante, since the "*Divina Comedia*" was the first book which she had read with Leonard. She had an exalted reverence for the great Italian poet, and felt he ought to be in her father's room.

"Though," as poor Mr. Seymour used often to say

as he stood half puzzling over the odd looking portrait, "I don't see, my Jessy, what an old fashioned old man like I am have to do with Dante's portrait, for I don't know a word of Italian. You are all in advance of an old stager like me." And he turned and kissed his daughter. "I do not quite see what companionship Dante, and Bishop Ken, and good Bishop Wilson will find. I think it is strange company. But however, I dare say he was a very great man; and I am sure the three good Bishops will value the good in him if there is any."

And Mr. Seymour made himself happy; though I ought not to forget to say, that, one morning when Jessy came to breakfast, on the opposite side of the door to that where Dante's portrait hung, there was one of Cowper in his nightcap; and as Mr. Seymour, with an arch smile, watched Jessy's face he said, "You see, such old fashioned people as we are can find poets in nightcaps of our own school, as well as you young mediævalists."

So Cowper became an antidote to Dante.

But we wander—where were we? Jessy had just come to breakfast.

"Here is an invitation to the hall to dinner; you will go, my dearest child, won't you?"

"Dear, dear papa," said Jessy, kissing her father's forehead, "I think I had rather not."

"I think we ought, my love," said Mr. Seymour.

"If you wish it, papa," said Jessy with a sigh, as she glanced at the "Times," which lay uncut upon the table.

"But I do wish they would not ask us just now."

But Jessy went on making the tea, as she had always done since her mother had died. And the good old gentleman begun to read aloud extracts "from our own correspondent." He never noticed how the colour came and went in that young face opposite him. Nor indeed if he had, would he have thought much of it; he was one of another sort; of another school; of another age. He could glory in Shakespeare. He could cry over Ophelia, and read her speeches with such pathetic tenderness as would have brought tears from your own eye; but strange to say, and yet it is natural, he never noticed and never shed a tear for her, who hourly by his side, would listen, with lips unclosed and eye intently gazing, to the words of Ophelia when she thought Hamlet had forgotten her, and think— But never mind.

"Well then, Jessy, you will go?"

"Yes, dear papa," and Jessy wrote the answer that they would come.

And the day came, and the guests arrived.

The fire blazed high from the ample hearth on scarlet curtains which dropped from the lofty cornice; and on drawings of Stanfield and Landseer, which hung upon the walls. Those curtains, from behind which Alice used to dream that tiny forms crept out at night, and danced wildly on the coloured carpet, and then trooped back again in haste and hurry tumbling one over the other, with high peaked caps and Spanish cloaks which covered to the elbow. Those curtains, which Mr. Loraine used to look at with such satisfaction, as "they kept the

draught out so admirably; Collinson has hung them capitally, my dear." Those curtains which Mrs. Loraine was always so anxious to change for white muslin when June came. Those curtains, which the housemaid used to take such a time in adjusting in the morning upon the circular pin, and every fold of which curtains this evening Cicely had arranged with exact nicety.

The grand piano stood open for Jessy to sing, and the Miss Tattlers to play.

But the company were arriving. Mr. Cruttenden came first. He was a young Cambridge man, very religious, full of extreme Low Church views, determined to evangelize the parish, a great nuisance to Mr. Seymour, and poetically in love with Jessy. Cicely could not bear him.

Then came Captain Bailey. He had been at the Alma, and came home ill; agreeable, real, gentlemanly, and simple-minded; three and thirty, and a decent fortune.

"My dear, he will do for Cicely," said Mr. Loraine.

"My dear papa," said Cicely, "but—"

Then came the Tattlers. Mr. Tattler was a man who had retired from business, with no point about him, which would enable you to recall a single feature of mind or body half an hour after you had left him, except his gold watch, chain, and seals, which from their singularity in this day you noticed and remembered. Mrs. Tattler was fat, good-natured, and not intelligent, was dressed in blue, with blue velvet bands in her hair. The two Miss Tattlers came in close behind their father and mother, looking over the parental figures as if to

say "we are of course behind, but we *are* the important ones of the family. They were dressed in some material, the colour of which was the accident which retained the greatest hold on the memory, being of a bright geranium hue.

Then came Mr. and Mrs. Bathurst, singularly nice people. Mr. Bathurst was about forty, rector of a parish of four hundred souls; he was rural dean. Mrs. Bathurst was dressed in black. Everybody liked her except Lady Burgoyne, who thought that she was presumptuous; and Miss Peggs, who thought she was fine, and Mr. Philpot, who thought she was cold.

But I have forgotten to mention good Mr. Seymour, who true to his character, had come to a minute, and Jessy on his arm. She was dressed in white muslin. She wore a large bracelet, which Leonard had given her, with a pink and white cameo upon it; otherwise she had no ornament, for though Rickards her maid had brought her in some artificial white and red camelias for her hair, she did not wear them. That little crown of jessamine was long since dead, and she did not care to wear another, and said, poor girl, in her simplicity that she "never would till Leonard came to put it on for her." That slight paleness flew over her face, which usually did when she came to the hall, and looked round on the pieces of furniture, which she so well knew. Such things do often look us in the face, when we come into a room, with that stolid quietness, which seems to say, "Ah! we have got associations wound round us, which cling to us too closely for those who see us to forget them."

Mrs. Loraine received Jessy with her usually warm affectionate welcome; and Mr. Seymour's entrance was hailed with joy by the children, with a cordial welcome by Mr. Loraine, and respect by them all.

"Jessy, dear," said little Grace's gentle loving voice, as she crept up to the clergyman's daughter, when she had sat down upon the sofa; "here is a nosegay of winter flowers I have got for you," and she pushed the flowers into Jessy's hand as she pressed it.

"Dear Grace," said Jessy, smiling, "you always think of me so kindly. How beautiful they are."

"They are out of Leonard's garden," said Alice quickly. Grace pinched Alice's arm and frowned. She had a feeling in her which told her that it was better not to say that; though indeed to a very slight observer the change in Jessy's manner would have shown that Alice's remark was mistimed.

But the company went in to dinner, and the social scene began. Maxwell was in the hall waiting to make successful skirmishes on the receding footmen who bore out the remnants of soup and fish. They were at a disadvantage with the young hero of this guerilla warfare, as with hurried footsteps and distorted figures they bore the ample dishes towards the kitchen. Maxwell, like a Zouave waiting to intercept Russian commissariat waggons on the road to Sebastopol, stood prepared to cut off the supplies from the expectant kitchen-maids and anticipating butlers.

A plunge into the remains of the white soup, and rapid and decisive grasps made at the quiet remains of the turbot

were followed quickly by an energetic and smothered cry of "Master Maxwell! Master Maxwell!" But the young hero was undaunted. It was a mere matter of tactics. He knew the respective characters of James and Samuel, and directed his plan accordingly. Few things are more different than the footman inside the dining-room and the footman outside; one step alters the whole man. *There* silent, passive, impassible, he stands like a hieroglyphic behind the chair with a face which would not move a muscle if he heard the death of his own wife and all his children calmly announced. One step taken into the hall, he is all movement, rapidity, and comedy; the face becomes a dissolving view of varied expressions; and every conceivable form of motion is manifested to frightened children, daring Maxwells, and laughing housemaids.

This sort of scene Maxwell delighted in. Among other memories of his early days mixed up with successful inroads on ruined fish, and shallow soup, was the recollection of the wonderful ebb and flow of conversation through the dining-room door as it opened and closed; like the moanings of the sea shell as you apply it to or remove it rapidly from your ear, or like the sound of distant surges in the gusts of a boisterous wind. The singular mixture of conversation, made up of male voices and female trebles, the clatter of knives and forks, the movements of footmen, and the tinkle of crystal. To children's minds what was the impression of the depth and capacity of that mighty roll of talk!—Wise as the deep sayings of Academus, or the consultations of the Congress of Vienna!

It may be a question whether advancing manhood has borne out the early impressions or no. Anyhow the conversation is not always of that deep nature; though there are moments when even we sit and marvel on the depth of some deep converse held by those who sit opposite us speaking continually in low, soft tones, and with heads slightly inclined; and we feel a doubt as to our own powers of going on with our own neighbour. And sometimes the same idea occupies their minds too, when men who *dare* to say *anything* talk of the "figure of sherry," "the price of a cob," or the local politics of their own hamlet which no one else understands.

These are pieces of table talk taken at random which we have heard.

"How cold it is!"

"Exceedingly."

"They say there has been nothing like it since '14."

"Yes, that was a dreadful year. But you gentlemen must so enjoy skating,—I always envy you."

"O, I don't know, I haven't had time to learn to skate yet, there has never been a frost long enough. Do you stay in the country all this winter?"

"Yes:"

"Do you really,—it must be so dull."

"O no! There are such beautiful tints in December; and I like so the simplicity of the rustics."

"Yes, but then there is so little society."

"O, I hate society, I so love to be alone. I would never dine out if I could help it. I do it to please papa. He is so vexed if we will not; we dined out three

times last week, and, I can't bear to think of it, we are going out twice next week. Is not the war awful?"

&c., &c., &c.

Here was another of the waves of speech which came on the burdened air through the open door at the Hall.

"Have you read *Heartsease*?"

"O yes, it is nothing to *The Heir of Redclyffe*."

"Is not that a wonderful book?"

"O, I am afraid of speaking of it, it makes me miserable. I fancy everybody I see is Guy."

"Well, I fancy nobody is."

"I do not like Violet, she is so insipid, so tiresome."

"O I think she is perfect; in that scene with Arthur after the child is born!"

"Yes, some people say the author borrowed that scene from another tale."

"No, shocking,—Miss Yonge borrow?"

"Well, I don't know."

"I can't bear *Theodora*."

"O I think her a noble character; I think she is the best Miss Yonge ever drew."

"I can't understand Lady Martindale. Is she proud or stupid?"

"Ah well! There I am puzzled."

"What a dear man John is: so real and natural. I am sure I know a John."

"So do I. The beauty of his character is he is so unselfish."

"What is the charm about books of this kind?"

"Why I suppose it is that they so exactly describe

what we have noticed, and either do not or cannot describe ourselves ; and there is always pleasure in that."

" Why ?"

" I suppose partly to see what people would or will *do* who are like ourselves, and to see what we are likely to do, or will happen to us."

" Yes, that is true."

" Miss Austin is the great type of this school."

" Oh I can't bear her. She is so dry."

" Well, I cannot agree."

" Don't you think the catastrophe in *Heartsease* is a little poor and uninteresting ?"

" Unexciting, but hardly uninteresting. It is the fashion now-a-days to write in that way. ' *Experience of Life*' I still contend to be the best. That scene about the money is very fine."

" O yes, I remember, very,—which do you like best, Miss Yonge or Miss Sewell ?"

Well, there we will stop, as we have our own views, and do not want to be biassed by any one whose judgment is so evidently likely to influence us.

Mr. Bathurst, who had not said a word for the last five minutes, for he had sat next Miss Tattler, and they could not get on at all, had overheard the above dialogue between the other Miss Tattler and her companion. He broke in rather roughly, and with a very great want of consideration for a young lady's feelings, who is under the influence of the above mentioned books, said—

" Well, there's nothing like *S. Ronan's Well* in my opinion."

"I never read that," said the young lady, turning to her other companion, "we never may read novels."

"O then you don't call the *Heir of Redclyffe* a novel."

"A novel! Oh, dear, no, who ever would—how shocking."

"Well, for my part," said Mr. Bathurst, in an unusually inconsiderate way for him, "there is nothing like Sir Walter Scott, nothing; in my opinion he has never been equalled. It strikes me that '*S. Ronan's Well*' exactly does what you said just now, combines the description of daily life with one thrilling and beautifully conceived catastrophe, there's nothing like it. I wish I could write like him."

So do we.

But to go on—the ladies retired, and the gentlemen continued the wave of discourse which still went on advancing landwards.

"Well, Captain," said Mr. Loraine, as soon as he had pushed aside the wine glasses and arranged the bottles, turning to Captain Bailey, who had been asked very much because he would be such an entertaining fellow just come fresh from the battle of Alma. All were in full expectation of a vivid description of the fight, so far better than even that of the "*Morning Herald*;" an account of each event; the swerve of the 23rd, and the advance of the Guards, all were topics on which, of course, Captain Bailey would be perfect.

"Well, Captain, we're dying to hear a description of the battle."

"Of Alma, do you mean, eh?"

"To be sure," said Mr. Loraine.

"Ay, well, yes, there was something of a battle," said the captain drily and quietly.

"Something of a battle," said Sir John; "why my dear captain, what do you mean? Something of a battle; why it was the most gallant action since Waterloo. Something of a battle!"

"Well," said the captain, "you're quite right, I believe. But you know we don't know it's a battle when we are in it."

"Don't know it when you are in it; why then, when on earth do you know of it?" said Sir John in unfeigned astonishment.

"Well, when the 'Times' comes out," said the captain apparently wholly ignorant of the point of difficulty. "The 'Times' told us of the battle of Alma admirably; we poor wretches were simply aware that we were driving the Russians up somewhere, and into the sea if we could."

"Bless the man," said Sir John, "why he doesn't seem to know so much about it as we do here. Why, Captain, did you ever hear of a place called Sebastopol?"

The captain smiled.

And yet the captain was mentioned by Lord Raglan, and in the "Times," "for the invaluable assistance he rendered in capturing three guns through his gallantry;" and it was said also that "he was a promising young officer."

"I think there will be peace," said Captain Bailey quietly, and filling his glass as he spoke. "I don't think the Russians wish to fight it out."

"Impossible," said Mr. Cruttenden, who had been trying to be heard and gain influence from the extreme end of the table, where he had through dinner felt the consolation, that however little he might gain in conversation, he at least was sheltered by the shadow of the close vicinity of the head of the house. But now by that sad evolution which transfers for some strange reason the host to the seat just vacated by the hostess, poor Mr. Cruttenden was left like shingle on the shore which the tide never reaches at low water, and lies high, dry, and neglected. However, he stretched forward with considerable energy, and said in answer to Captain Bailey's remark, "quite impossible, there can be no peace. It is the last war, and that must be a long one. Scripture in the description of this war clearly gives it a longer duration than any which has preceded it."

The dogmatic nature of this statement surprised, but did not disturb Captain Bailey. He simply looked round at the speaker with a calm gaze of gentlemanly incredulity, and said that he had not been aware of the circumstance.

Mr. Bathurst, whose character was in all respects dissimilar from Mr. Cruttenden, and had a singular objection to young laymen working parishes in opposition to old and wise rectors, was quite prepared with a line, and looked round at Mr. Cruttenden with an eye which intended much: and was on the verge of speaking, when Mr. Seymour, who was sitting next Mr. Loraine, took up the suggestion.

"Well, I cannot agree with you, sir; I must beg to

object to the close application of Holy Scripture to each event which arises, and to the interpretation of prophecy in so loose a manner as to leave it to the private interpretation of individuals, sects, or parties in the Church."

Mr. Bathurst who was sitting slightly forward looked attentively at the Rector, and then turned to Mr. Cruttenden, and was on the point of speaking, when the latter, who had now moved himself into the vacant chair next him, in order to draw nearer the scene of conflict, closed in at once with the Rector.

"Forgive me, sir, forgive me, if I say that those who have not studied the subject are scarcely likely to see its bearings." Mr. Bathurst frowned, and threw himself back in his chair, and Sir John Hibbert arched his eyebrows, and passed on the wine.

"If, sir, you have read a pamphlet called *The Coming Struggle*, ——"

"I have," said Mr. Bathurst, starting forward suddenly, "and all I can say is that it fully illustrates and justifies the Rector's principle, fully—what must a course of thus anticipating events, and seizing passing circumstances as the antitype to prophecy come to? It must shake and unsettle the faith of many ——"

"Pardon me," interposed Mr. Cruttenden, "but ——"

But Mr. Bathurst went on, turning his eye to Mr. Loraine, and his back slightly on Mr. Cruttenden. "A man is told that this is the final war. He believes it as a ground of faith, for those who propagate views of this kind are always singularly dogmatic and exclu-

sive, and make the holding them of greater necessity to religion than even a holy life. I say, then, suppose a man told this of the present war; Peace is made at Vienna, or the Czar dies, and the whole breaks down, and with it the man's faith."

"Very true," said Sir John Hibbert, evidently struck with the force of the argument, and earnestly hoping it would wind it up.

"Well," said Mr. Seymour, in a kind and mild voice, "I cannot quite feel that; I should rather say that we should be very careful and prudent in the statement of these opinions to others, and hold our own judgments in abeyance till events have more fully transpired. It would seem to me dangerous to form any precipitate judgment. I believe that there were many who predicted similar things of the war with Napoleon; nor was the American war free from those kinds of expectations. I should be inclined to object rather to the laying down the law about such matters, and the placing them before weak and ignorant and pliable minds as truths, than to surmising them for ourselves."

Mr. Cruttenden again began, having been exceedingly uneasy for some time. But it was vain; before he could get his throat up to the right pitch for the coming voice Mr. Loraine had stepped in, "Pray, Mr. Seymour, what is the view of you Clergymen about the war?—I hear that many Clergymen have of late been preaching up war. I confess I cannot understand the line."

"Well," said the Rector, "I suppose it might be

thought a mistake to preach up the war, as I do not quite see the fitness of politics in the pulpit. But the general question of war seems to me to be strictly a religious one, as much as famine and pestilence; and in many senses, I confess, old fashioned as I am, it strikes me that all the cry of the Peace Society is very false and irreligious."

"Just so," said Sir John, "admirable, Seymour, I hate the cant."

"It was not the cant so much as their mistaken view of an important subject," said the Rector.

"The power and motives of Russia, eh?" said Captain Bailey, wishing to take part in the general social engagement.

"No, no," said the Clergyman, "I referred to the sad mistake that we should reach ends by our own means, while God has appointed means of His own for us to use. Peace gained by false compromise, or without many of the noble sacrifices of war, the heroism, self-denial, forgiveness, and patience exercised, would be but a hollow boon after all. It would be but like a man trying to reach the end of the religious life without going through the discipline necessary for it."

"Excellent," cried Mr. Bathurst, sinking back into his chair, and looking at the curtain. Mr. Cruttenden got out a monosyllable, he was not quite sure himself what it was.

But Sir John said, "Join the ladies, Lorraine?" And all rose, Mr. Cruttenden feeling very awkward, for nothing in the world is so awkward as to have given birth to a monosyllable at a dinner party after much

effort, and not yourself to know what it was ; he dipped his fingers into a finger-glass, and spoke in a low tone to Captain Bailey, who was far too simple, and natural, and quiet, (which most soldiers are) not to answer him, so he did, and told him in answer to his question, that "the Battle of Alma was a very striking circumstance indeed."

At this crisis Mr. Seymour touched Mr. Cruttenden on the shoulder, and said with a good humoured smile, "I'm sorry we don't agree, my young friend ; I shall be very glad to read your pamphlet, if you will be good enough to lend me it."

The importance of Mr. Seymour's patronage, and above all his singular kindness, quite took away any inclination on Mr. Cruttenden's part to take a line in opposition to the Rector, and he said, "Thank you, sir, I will with sincere pleasure." And all were in the drawing-room.

As the gentlemen entered, the drawing-room looked warm and cheerful, and the scarlet of the curtains shed an atmosphere of comfort and brilliance over the figures and the furniture.

Alice and Grace were moving about gaily and quietly in their wide white muslin frocks, the pictures of youth and happiness. The conversation was as usual ; giving the impression in its grand total of considerable depth and power, though when separated into its various and elementary parts it became as shallow and weak as most things could be. The entry of the gentlemen for a mo-

ment stopped it ; and the view rapidly dissolved into a new tableau. Mr. Loraine, Sir John Hibbert, and Mr. Seymour occupied the rug, and were soon afloat on discussions on the probabilities of peace or the prospects of a Crimean winter. Captain Bailey was standing over the Miss Tattlers, talking village politics. While Mr. Cruttenden, like a man who felt uncertain and insecure as to his position, hovered near the door, glad to get even Mr. Philpot to a fixed conversation for five minutes, while through the side of his eye he was anxiously watching the footman in the earnest hope that a further slight would not be put upon his dignity by having no tea offered him ; but having performed several circuitous evolutions, the tray stopped opposite Mr. Cruttenden. With this relief and a tea cup in his hand, he regained courage, and soon plunged into a deep theological discussion with Mr. Philpot on the Sultan and the Czar ; Mr. Philpot having thoroughly made up his mind that he was not likely to strike any nobler game than Mr. Cruttenden that night.

Cicely was of course talking with Mr. Bathurst about coal tickets, clubs, girls' schools, and the National Society ; while Mrs. Loraine was giving vent to her kind-heartedness on one side of her in occasionally talking with Miss Pegg about the Dorcas Club ; and to her inclination on the other side in more frequently talking with Mrs. Bathurst about wet nurses and governesses.

At the end of a long sofa, under three wax lights which burnt with soft lustre on the wall, with Grace by her side and Alice standing before her, sat Jessy Seymour. The brilliant light in the room, and the

shadow of her own long curls, prevented any but the most attentive eye from noticing the paleness of her features, or the flush which occasionally came and went, like the shade of some phantom thought which crossed her mind. She was talking to Grace, whose hand she held, about a long walk they meant to take to see an old woman who lived on the confines of the parish, a great friend of Jessy's; and how they were to come back and drink tea with old Nanny and Mrs. Tilly in the almshouse. A sort of warm comfort came to Jessy's heart, when she felt that Alice standing before her hid her from the company; and though every now and then her eye did vacantly wander off Grace to the winter nosegay on the table, or a portrait of a young soldier on the wall, it soon came back again to its accustomed resting place.

"Will not Miss Seymour sing?" said the decided voice of Mr. Bathurst.

The colour quickly flew from her cheek.

"Oh yes, do!" said Alice, "do sing one of the songs, you know, that Leonard used to like so."

"Do you like to sing, Jessy," said Grace, looking up through the curls into Jessy's face; "shall I run and fetch the music?"

"I brought none," said Jessy, in a low tremulous voice.

"Oh yes! I know Jessy will sing," said Cicely, walking across the room to the place where her victim sat.

"Indeed I cannot to-night, dear Cicely," said Jessy quietly.

"Oh yes, I know that Jessy will sing," said Mrs. Loraine, getting up, and coming across the room, "if I ask her."

"I brought no music; indeed I did not," said Jessy, "and I do not feel quite able to sing to-night. Cicely, do play that piece of Mendelssohn."

"Cannot Miss Seymour sing without her music, sir?" said Mr. Bathurst appealing to Mr. Seymour on the rug.

"Oh yes," said Mr. Seymour, coming forward, "Jessy will sing two or three of her pretty little songs which she knows by heart."

"Sing 'Go forget me,' " said Alice, "you know that, Jessy."

Poor Jessy! to sing *that* song to-night!

She looked half wildly round the group which surrounded her, and smiled as she said, "I will try." The very despair to which her mind was brought by that last suggestion seemed to decide her upon acting.

She rose, and with Grace by her side, she reached the piano, and laying the flowers which Grace had given her down on the instrument, she passed her fingers lightly over the notes, as if expecting to find in the music of their melody some relief to her sorrow. Grace sat beside her, and though there was nothing whatever remarkable in the scene, there was more than one who remembered it afterwards. There was a silence, as Jessy began her song; for though she had no power of voice, and no artistic beauty in her execution, there was a low soft sweetness in her tones, which arrested every one. It was more like breathing crystallized into song,

than strictly singing, so soft, so quiet, so little laboured; and to-night as she sung the song which Alice had suggested, there was such a touching pathos in the notes that Mr. Bathurst uttered an exclamation of delight, and Mr. Seymour wiped his eye.

“ Go, forget me, why should sorrow
O'er thy brow one shadow fling?
Go, forget me; and to-morrow
Brightly smile and blithely sing.

“ Go, forget me, why should sadness
Shade one passing hour of thine?
Go where eyes of youth and gladness
Speak with deeper power than mine.

“ Go to those whose soul can give thee
Gifts which I can ne'er impart.
Go and live in memory only
To this poor forsaken heart.

“ But whoever shares thy gladness,
All thy weal and woe of life,
Equals not her wild devotion,
Who, thou saidst, should be thy wife.

“ Oh remember one is wandering
Through life's silent path alone;
One who if thou'rt ever lonely,
Still, oh still remains thine own.

“ Go, forget me ”—

She paused. Her eye wandered round the room, and in its course for an instant rested on the portrait on the wall. The last note had shown a slight tremulous-

ness in her voice, which only seemed to rivet more closely the silent attention of the listening room. She began the last stanza—

“Go, forget me”—

But the effort from some unfathomed reason was all too much. Whether it was that the cadences of music broke down the frail effort of self-command with which she had obeyed the wish of the company, or whether it was that the words themselves chimed in with some deep latent feeling in her bosom, and framed into syllables the scarcely ascertained impressions of her mind—it was hard to say; but she paused; and partly perhaps to pass off the embarrassment of the moment, she let her fingers run along the notes, which gradually melted into another tune, from which as abruptly leaving off, she turned and smiled at Grace; and taking up her flowers from where she had laid them, passed them over Grace's cheek, and said in a low tone, “I told you how it would be, Grace, I cannot sing without music.” She rose from her seat, and passed to the place where she had been before.

The retreat of Jessy was a signal for Cicely and Miss Tattler to play Mendelssohn: which they did magnificently, with their eyes fixed with intense earnestness on the page, both of them leaning forward, and slightly moving to the tune, but every movement was simultaneous. They performed the piece in great style, and in singular contrast with Jessy's song.

The din of conversation rapidly resumed its wonted sway; and not all the power of Cicely's execution, or

the blending of Miss Tattler's soul with Mendelssohn's was able to gain for the performers thirty seconds of that silence and attention which had hushed the room at *Jessy's* first note. Cicely did not care in the least degree for this ; in fact, she seemed as if she rather preferred it. When the music ceased, the conversation drew up also, as if the two were linked together with some mysterious bond of recognized communion. Cicely rose from the piano with a decided air, and walked straight to the table, as Mr. Bathurst approached her to admire the performance. Cicely immediately took up a piece of music on the table, saying, " Yes, we have no composer like Mendelssohn left, I can quite feel that ; although I find it difficult to understand all the distinctions we hear of now-a-days between him and Beethoven, and the earlier composers.

" Do you admire Beethoven, Miss Loraine ?" said Captain Bailey, turning to the table.

" Very much," said Cicely, " but I don't understand him ; he is so wild and eccentric : but I know he is very beautiful. Miss Seymour was telling me a singularly interesting story about him the other day. What was that story, *Jessy* ?" said Cicely, turning round to Miss Seymour, who was sitting on the sofa near her.

Jessy's slightly excited manner was enough to have told a mother, had she been there, that some effort that evening had been too much for her ; and such a one might justly have found cause of alarm in the too dilated eye, the flushed cheek, and the voice above its usual pitch.

"A story! what do you mean?" said Jessy. "About Beethoven?"

"Oh yes," said Grace, "I remember it. I heard Jessy tell it. You mean, don't you, about his sitting playing that beautiful composition, when the friend came in behind him, and stood and watched his movements of delight; until at last Beethoven stopped, and burst into tears; and his friend went up to him, and told him the pleasure that he had felt in what he had heard, and Beethoven put his hand on his friend's arm and said, 'What would I not give to be you, to have heard it all, it must have been so beautiful: but I am quite deaf, and did not hear a note. I only wept to think how beautiful it *must have been!*' That was the story, was it not, Jessy?" said Grace, looking round to Jessy with that intuitive feeling which young girls so often have, who have as yet known but little of life, that things are wrong with another of Jessy's age, but they do not know why.

"Yes," said Jessy, "that was it. Leonard told it me."

But at this moment the door opened, and the carriages were announced, and the company quickly broke up. Jessy stood in the hall, leaning on Mr. Seymour's arm, wrapped round with a large cloak lined with swans-down, while the cold wind kept pouring through the open doorway. Grace was trying to keep the cloak close round Jessy, while the Miss Tattlers were getting into their carriage.

The Clergyman and his daughter reached the parsonage. The little cheerful study was waiting their reception with the black bronze lamp burning on the table, and the fire ruddy on the hearth, and glowing on the long lines of Blair, Tillotson, and Barrow, which peered in dingy gilt through the glass of the book-cases; while on one side of the door Cowper in his nightcap, seemed to be eyeing with a mixture of simplicity and suspicion his comrade poet on the other side, who, also arrayed in a similar night gear, showed that mixture of the sorrow and affectation belonging to the Italian character.

"There seem a number of new-fashioned poets now-a-days," said the Rector to his daughter, "if I may judge by those whose books lie on the table at the Hall. Why, dear me, you young people quite outdo us in our quaint, old-fashioned views of poetry, and the like; but never mind, Jessy, you will never beat me out of Shakespeare: there is nothing like him, and I will defy all your Germanising schools to produce his equal."

Jessy was used to her father's jealousy about his favourite poet, and had delighted in her childhood's hours in sitting listening to her father's musical voice reciting recollections of Kemble. But Mr. Seymour, in his walk up and down the study, had drawn up opposite a little drawing on pale green paper of Ophelia just after Hamlet had gone out and left her, and he must needs give vent to his feelings before he rang the bell for prayers.

Jessy was sitting in a chair with her head leaning

on her hand, tired from the excitement of the evening and longing for repose. Mr. Seymour had been half speaking to himself, and only half conscious of Jessy's presence. The sight of Ophelia's figure drew out the oft recited passage—

“Oh what a noble mind is here o'erthrown,
Quite, quite down,
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with extasy. Oh, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen—see what I see.”

“Oh Jessy!” said the old gentleman, wiping the tear which moistened his cheek, “is it not beautiful?”

Jessy did not answer; her father approached her.

“Dear, dear papa,” said she, “it is beautiful; but pray don't go on.”

“What is the matter with my child to-night,” said he coming up and putting his hand fondly on his daughter's head.

“Nothing, dear papa, nothing,” said Jessy, as covering her face with her hand she burst into tears: “I am not happy; I am very, very unhappy.”

“About what?” said Mr. Seymour anxiously, “tell me, my girl.”

Tell him! tell any one the secret of that unascertained woe! Impossible!

“We must have prayers, Jessy, and then we can talk more freely of this.”

Mr. Seymour rung the bell; the two maid servants and the man came in, and Mr. Seymour read, as usual, the family prayers for the evening. When the servants were gone, Jessy rose.

"Jessy!" said the Clergyman looking rather disappointed that he could not gain the confidence of his daughter.

Jessy paused.

"Pray do not fret yourself about any trouble that touches your young heart. Do remember, my girl, the blessed precepts of religion, which tell us so clearly, 'great are the troubles of the righteous: the LORD delivereth him out of all.' Though I cannot imagine that my dear girl has much trouble at her young age."

"Beautiful, papa," said Jessie, as if for the first time since her childhood the verse from the Bible struck upon her ear. "Oh yes, dear papa, I am not—I am not as religious as I used to be; oh you don't know what goes on in this poor heart of mine. Do kneel down and pray for me as when I was little. I don't know why, but I find it so hard to pray."

Mr. Seymour was touched with his daughter's manner, and, kneeling down by her side, offered up to God an earnest prayer, with every word of which her whole soul seemed to go, as, with her face buried in her hands, she knelt and wept beside him.

The prayer of the good man showed that quiet moderation of mind which prevented many an extravagancy of passing opinion; indeed he had not yet discovered that even Bishop Andrewes or Wilson were the necessary wings of the devout mind, but contented himself in his

devotions with extracts from "our own admirable Liturgy," or from pages of Barrow or Bull; but his prayer was full of that honest fervour which burnt heavenwards.

"Thou, O God, hast taught me from my youth up until now; therefore will I tell of Thy wondrous works. Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am grey-headed. Oh what great troubles hast Thou shown me, and yet didst Thou turn and refresh me." Jessy rose from her knees, and kissing her father, they separated—he to wander up and down his bed-room for a while to undergo that close examination of himself as to the faults of the past day, which became one who knew his days were numbered, and that he was fast hastening to that goal beyond which there is no change in the sinner's state; this done, he was soon asleep in calm security of God's favour.

But Jessy drawing up the blind, and letting in the full shining of the winter's moon, sat gazing out on to the dreamy hills, and watching the fleecy clouds as they approached or for an instant clouded the silver orb of heaven, while ever and anon the pale beam played on her still features and unbound hair. It was very late before she retired to her rest, and yet she did nothing, and scarcely knew or could fathom the condition of her own feelings; she poured out her soul to God in earnest prayer, and fell asleep. She woke frequently, starting up in dreams in which her mind had wandered off about Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, and Jacob's sorrow when he buried Rachel under the tree at Ephrath.

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS.

SINCE the days of the letter of which Uriah the Hittite was the bearer, and those which Jezebel sent to the elders of Jezreel, "sealed with Ahab's seal," letters and their carriers have ever excited as much apprehension as hopeful expectation in the minds of those who have received them. And the post has been looked upon since the days of Ahasuerus, when letters were written "by posts into all the king's provinces to destroy and to kill," as often as harbingers of sorrow and despair, as they have been of joy and welcome. The postman, who would bear with him the expression of Scripture which most suits his calling, would carry with him the words of the Psalmist, when speaking of the holy man he says, "He shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, because his heart standeth fast and believeth in the LORD." A fitting motto for the post bag.

The postman! curious and unconscious being, with his rapid footsteps, and his vacant and listless eye, his shoulder slightly stooping beneath his weight, his sorted packets, and his pliant finger which allots to each expectant sufferer in his district his daily share of agony or relief! What images does not the mention of his name bring to the mind, tracking his path with so many silent tongueless woes pent up in his leather bag; while the hour of his accustomed visit is looked forward to by so

many with cold hand and restless eye, by the frequent journey to the window, and the scarcely tasted and unrelished breakfast. The death of the child far away, the news of bankruptcy and shattered fortune, the hopeless effort of the friend to rescue or to save, the chilling refusal to the earnest solicitation, are borne by him with reckless indifference.

That letter with a strange scrawling hand, beginning at the top of the left hand corner, and addressed to "Mrs. Redding, near the Crown, Brandon, Lincolnshire," is from the girl of seventeen who left her home a year before well instructed in the Sunday School to take a place of "all work," which her aunt had got her fifty miles away; it opens with the quiet announcement that "her health is good, and that she hopes that that of all inquiring friends is the same;" and it goes on to tell without even a colon or an adjective of feeling, "how she has fallen from the path of virtue, been seduced, and got upon her breast 'the child of misfortune.'" Without note or comment she signs herself, "your unworthy daughter," and the father's heart is broken, and the mother never lifts up her head again.

And that other letter written in a clear text hand in the centre of the envelope, addressed to "Mrs. Burton, on the Cow Ground, near the Duck, Brandon, Lincolnshire," for a moment baffles expectation, as at the open cottage door the woman takes it in with conscious pride, and peering children gaze over her elbow at the rare prize. She opens it, and in the same text hand finds herself accosted as "Dear mother,—This leaves me well,

as I hope it finds you at present, thank God for it; give my love to all inquiring friends on the Cow Ground. I hope Susan will keep her place, and that Tommy will be a good boy. I dare say you wonder why you have not seen me again; I left home at four o'clock on Monday to get work at Paddington, near London, and, dear mother, I have 'listed, and we are at the depôt at the Isle of Wight; and, dear mother, as we are going out to the war in three weeks, and, dear mother, if I am killed I shan't see you and father again; I am very sorry for what I have done, but it's too late now. Your undutiful and wicked son, JOSEPH BURTON.

"P.S.—This is written by a young man who writes all the letters for them who are no scholars in our regiment.

"P.S.—Dear mother, I left a clasped knife and a new sixpence in my Sunday coat pocket as hangs up behind the door. Dear mother, will you give the knife to Tommy, and the new sixpence to Susan. The Lord bless you, and good-bye."

"Then as how he's 'listed," said Mrs. Burton, who had gone into the next cottage to Mrs. Wall, for Mrs. Wall to read the letter to her; and while it was being read she stood with her uncombed iron grey hair, and draggletailed gown, the picture of shiftless poverty leaning against the door, listening to it. "Then as how he's 'listed, eh?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Wall, "and they say as how there are few likely to come back from this war. I heard a man say last Sunday as how each Russian was possessed

of seven devils apiece, and there's no killing 'em though they've been shot three times through the head. It's an unked thing, as I think, as we've got such rulers as fights with such men; that's as I think, however."

"Ah, it be!" said Mrs. Burton as she left the cottage with the letter in her hand, for though she took it all so quietly, that woman's heart was broken, as a stone might be with a hammer. He who had gone with all his dirt and bootless lounging was her child of misfortune and shame, born before she was married: and the very woe which she had suffered for him—the hot tears she had shed on its baby face, when an outcast from her father's home she had been obliged to seek work where she could; the battles she had fought for him when Burton had favoured his own children, and dared "her Joe" to leave the corner, had so endeared that boy to her, that though she said not a word to any body, but went straight to the wash-tub and began squeezing down the heavy masses of clothing through which the soapy water oozed, and went on talking in her own loud voice to the children in the next room, yet she went on all the time thinking of "her Joe." And, poor thing, she came down to me the next day to show me the letter, and she had a wild scheme in her mind that I should write to all the rich people in the village to try and raise a subscription to buy him out. And when I showed her how impracticable the plan was, she made no kind of demur, but simply said, "I believe you're right, sir," and made up her mind not to see her boy again in this world, as easily as you would to go out for an hour's walk, or leave off an old coat: and yet I

believe in that woman's heart there is a deep wound made which no rolling years will ever heal.

The cheerful breakfast-room of the hall was ever a scene of hospitality and comfort. The rich Turkey carpet which covered the floor; the engravings on the walls, of Lord Cornwallis's reception of the sons of Tippoo Saib, Wolfe's death, and Nelson's last words on the Victory, interspersed with graphic portraits of Shakespeare's characters, with many other articles of furniture, gave an air of comfort and cheerfulness. The urn hissed and puffed upon the table; the silver coffee-pot, at the other end, betokened the sphere of Cicely's dominion; while the chairs on either side spoke for the domestic habits of the owners of the mansion in having all their children round them at the morning meal. Prayers were just over in the adjoining room; the sickly winter sunshine streamed in through the double plate-glass windows as Cicely and her mother entered together; the former rushed to the table to seize a letter that lay upon it. For be it remembered, our letters in this chapter are of various dates, ranging from September to December.

"From the Crimea, from Leonard," cried Cicely with honest delight as she broke the seal. And the angry indignation of the tea-urn, and the silent, unimproving cooling of the silver coffee-pot, were alike disregarded, as Alice, Grace, Miss Burnet the governess, Mrs. Loraine, Maxwell, all gathered round Cicely;

while Mr. Loraine, taking up *The Times*, and cutting it open, sat down quietly in an arm-chair; and having read the first line of the leader, laid it down upon his knee to listen to Leonard's letter.

Cicely opened and read the letter, as follows—

"My dearest family,—Here we are at Balaklava. The flank march was accomplished with much dexterity, though some men are inclined to blame it ——" "Humbug," said Maxwell, "it's the finest thing that ever was done; I wish I had been that fellow Maxse." "I dare say," said Alice, "you would have made a fine ride of it." "Now, Miss Alice," cried Maxwell, moving in column towards her. "Mamma!" cried Alice. "My dears," said Mrs. Loraine, "I really want to hear your brother's letter." *"There is no doubt it was an incautious movement, for at any moment the Russians might have cut us to pieces had they known of our daring enterprise; in fact, once Lord Raglan and his staff were entirely separated from the army; and the thickness of the brushwood was such, that to have formed a rapid conjunction would have been most difficult. Simferopol, to which the Russians have retreated since the affair of the Alma, lay far to our left. There are some Russian prisoners we have taken, who stick to it that Menschikoff allowed us to make the flank movement to follow out views of his own——"* "A pretty dodge," said Maxwell, who had been moving in flank across a corner of the room from the fireplace to the piano, in order to realise the flank movement of the army, much to the amusement of Alice, who had been wondering what her brother's movements intended. "Well, I quite expected

to hear that," said Mr. Loraine, "I have no such faith in the star of England, and the certainty of her good movements as some people have. I should not be in the least surprised to hear that Lord Raglan had made some profound mistake." "Why, papa," said Maxwell, halting straight before his father with both hands in his pockets, "you do not mean that glorious old England can ever go down?" "Of course it can," said Alice. "Now, Alice, you're a traitor," said Maxwell, and off he set,—away flew Alice to the door. "My dears, I wish you would let your sister go on," said Mrs. Loraine, "how tiresome you are." "But, mamma," said Alice, "Maxwell isn't to call me a traitor." "Cicely, my love, go on," said Mrs. Loraine, firmly. Maxwell frowned and winked at Alice, which Alice abundantly returned, and Cicely read as follows, "*You should have seen the governor of Balaklava, he was such a venerable and fine old officer. He surrendered his sword with such dignity. Balaklava is a miserable place, narrow and dirty streets, with hills surrounding it on all sides towards Sebastopol. The worst of it is, we have got no navvies here; we are in sad want of roads; what we shall do when the winter sets in I don't know. The French occupy all the position to the left of us by Cape Chersonese, you will see it in the map plainly enough. On our right is the Inkerman road and the river Tchernaya, so that we and the French occupy a snug little bit surrounded on two sides by the sea; and on the third is the road I spoke of just now, and its shelving sides, which we fully expect Lord Raglan intends to fortify. On the fourth side lies Sebastopol itself,*

which we hope to take in the course of another week. It has been pretty well 'veni, vidi, vici' with us ——" "Construe that, Maxwell," said Alice, turning quickly round. "As if I couldn't," said Maxwell. "My dear," said Mrs. Loraine, taking advantage of the break, "would one of you fetch the map, for all these names do so perplex me?" "Yes, dear mamma," said Grace, running quickly out of the room.

"There seems to me to be a very presumptuous spirit in all our feelings as a nation," said the governess, who had been sitting with her spectacles on at the breakfast table, looking down gravely at the cloth, "and it seems to me we can hardly expect anything but a fall."

"I don't know much about your moral view," said Mr. Loraine, "but I have no faith in the men that manage the thing; incapacity, I believe, will be the cause of our downfall."

But Grace returned with the map, and Mrs. Loraine proposed that breakfast should be got through before the letter was finished, so all gathered round the table. In the performance of which act, a slight scuffle and bustle took place, immediately followed by Alice making a dart at her chair between the governess and her father, while Maxwell dashed after her like a dragon fly after a moth. Alice gave a faint cry, as she looked quickly round with nervous apprehension and a laugh of triumph on her face.

"Maxwell, will you be quiet?" said his father.

"Yes, sir," said Maxwell; "I was only going to chastise Alice for being a traitor to old England."

"I'm not," said Alice.

"I won't forget," said Maxwell, nodding his head as he went into his place.

"With regard to that question about a downfall," said Mr. Loraine, "I confess it seems to me that we have sent out men of another age to conduct the war; and the army itself is almost like a peace establishment. They've been quite out of all experience, except what Chobham could give. It seems to me it's a mistake in not having younger and more energetic men to conduct the matter. An age like ours cannot be reckoned according to the lapse of ordinary years; the immense stride of events, and rapid improvements of science turns a decade into a century."

"But, dear papa," said Cicely, "The Duke of Wellington fought the Peninsular campaign with much the same kind of apparatus."

"That is exactly what I was saying; the duke lived forty years ago, and we have sent out a man of the duke's school to carry out arrangements of the duke's date; and that when forty years of the most stirring time the world has ever seen has rolled up like a tide upon the shore; it seems to me preposterous. In every other profession in England we should laugh at such a thing being done. The medical man who still worked on the rules of medical science half a century back would never be sent for now, any more than the man of practical science would receive much deference when the limits of his knowledge were bounded by the beginning of the century. Politics move in the same manner; who would talk of 'whig' and 'tory' now? And the very man who forty years ago would have looked at

the reform bill, or the abolition of slavery as moral crimes, now takes his stand on their ground as the recognised data of a moral man."

"I'm a tory, sir," said Maxwell. But the remark passed in silence.

"And we are to send out our army," continued Mr. Loraine, "with the appurtenances and preparations of that antiquated day ——"

"Well, but, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "I suppose the Russians stand in the same attitude as we do."

"A very much worse one, I should have thought," said Cicely, who had been attentively listening to her father's remarks.

"By no means," said Mr. Loraine; "the Russians, though behind the world in many things, have prepared all the appliances of modern discoveries in warfare; besides which Russia is ruled by a man of supreme genius, and vast energy of will; who would recall or disgrace any general who was not entirely up to any crisis at the moment; and that while he rules a country teeming with countless hoards of military."

"A benighted country indeed," said the governess in a depressed tone of voice, "and a benighted king, shadowed by the withering boughs of the Greek Church, which is far worse than even the Roman," and Miss Burnet sighed, shook her head, finished the very dry piece of toast she had been eating without butter, and took up her knitting. Her remark also passed unanswered by.

"I have a great reverence for the Greek Church," said

Cicely, who, with the very greatest respect and regard for Miss Burnet, never let an opportunity pass of rebuffing her, especially on theological points, on which Cicely really had a large mind, and Miss Burnet a singularly narrow one.

"Events will show," said Mr. Loraine, "but, I must confess, I am not so sanguine as many of our neighbours."

"You don't mean we shan't lick the Russians, sir?" said Maxwell.

"Well, my boy, time will show that, too, and in the mean time, Cicely, let us hear the remainder of Leonard's letter."

Cicely read on,—

"My wound is rapidly mending ; pray do not in the least degree alarm yourself about it. I miss my poor Dennis sadly, he was invaluable to me ; his kind, honest attentions can never be replaced. I only trust he is safe and well cared for. They say the Russians are very kind to their prisoners, and some of our fellows who have already escaped, say that they really had nothing to complain of. But imagine what a state the town must soon be in with our firing—the dead already lying in the streets, and the shells bursting in all directions. I fear much for his safety. Randall and the youth are there, and I believe that Dennis will be of great use to them if they reach each other. Do let his family know how deeply I value him, and how I feel for their trial, pray do everything you can to console them ——"

"Has that basket gone down to Mrs. Dennis?" said Mrs. Loraine, addressing the governess. "Yes," said

Miss Burnet, "I took it yesterday, and she begged me to thank you much for it." "Poor thing," said Mrs. Loraine, "It must be a sad trial to them." "It's a singular thing," said Mr. Loraine, "but Parker told me yesterday that since the news of John Dennis' capture, four youths have enlisted on the mere strength of it. It seems to me that the greater the danger is, the more there are not only willing, but anxious to share it." "Do go and enlist," said Alice, looking past the governess at Maxwell. "Miss Burnet," said Maxwell, "will you teach Alice to respect her brother?" "Respect you indeed," said Alice, "I should like to know ——" "My dears," said Mrs. Loraine, "your sister wants to go on." And Cicely proceeded. "*The French are very fine fellows. They are very civil and obliging to our men, and seem to know far more about warfare than we do, at least they have come out better provided. They seem to know what they are about; they say the Algerine war did this for them. We have lost a few of our poor fellows at Balaklava. The other night two of our men were out and came suddenly on the Russian pickets. The fellows set upon them and pursued them; one of our men succeeded in leaping over an embankment, but the other, poor fellow, a sergeant, was bayoneted through to the ground. It is sharp work. Shells often explode among us, and the other day a party of our men were dining in a tent, when a shell came right in through the tent among them; it did no more mischief than to spoil the dinner, but it shows what sort of vicinity we are in.*" &c.

So ran Leonard's letter. "I will take it across to Jessy," said Cicely, rising.

"I think not, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "I have no doubt she has heard herself by this mail, and I think this will keep till she calls, she will be sure to come in the course of the day, and I will read part of it to her. I have my own reasons."

"Very well, mamma," said Cicely in a voice which implied that she could not understand her mother's view. And the breakfast party scattered.

But one morning the postman had a letter addressed to Mrs. Childers, who by this time had made up all her preparations for starting, and the next day was to leave Brandon. She had adhered to her own quiet resolution with the utmost firmness; and she was going out in connection with that noble body of women, who, under the direction of Miss Nightingale, were vindicating the character of their sex, if they might not of their Church in the East. What few things she meant to take were already packed up, and those articles of furniture which she had brought so carefully with her from Lincoln, Mrs. Loraine had very kindly offered to take charge of at the Hall.

Peggy Tompkins, who with the baby in her arms, had been watching the removal of the goods, and who had so carefully noted the events of the widow's daily life since the day of her advent to this one, the eve of her departure, averred most solemnly, "that she believed that the widow was going to change her situation, and that a young man, the very picture of her Lubin, had

visited the widow more than once, and that she, Peggy, knew how it would be." The young man having simply been a messenger employed by Mrs. Sidney Herbert with whom she had been in communication with regard to the arrangement for her journey to the East.

This morning the postman had a letter for her, and with a hand whose agitation even her calm mind could not control, she broke the seal.

"Dearest mother," it ran, "I think it right to tell you my wound has taken a worse turn, and I fancy my days are numbered. Would to God I might have been spared to support and cherish you, but, as you used always to say, 'Let Him do what seemeth Him good. I have received good at His hand, and shall I not receive evil?' I feel I am now writing my parting word to you, my dear, dear mother; how hard it is to know quite what to say, I believe all that could have been done has been for me, but I have been too ill to be removed to Scutari, and the hospital at Balaklava affords but poor accommodation. How frequently I have longed to have you by my side! I have often in the night closed my eyes and fancied you were by me, and been unwilling to open them to discover that you were not. How much I have thought of that long illness you nursed me through when I was sixteen!

"Forgive me, my dear mother, for saying all this to you. It is not, God knows, to wound or excite your feelings; but in the long hours of my suffering and loneliness I cannot tell you what a comfort it is to me to have some one to whom I can tell my feelings. Indeed,

the very memory of past scenes like these is full of reality and power in moments such as those I have to spend. There is one medical man here who has been exceedingly kind to me, a Doctor Burgess. Oh, what might not the medical staff do out here, if they would do their duty! What words of sympathy and consolation they might utter to those whom they tend; but alas! there is a sad neglect in this department. My impressions which I used to have in old days are much deepened, that the next work to the minister of God is that of the physician. I do not in the least wonder that some savage nations used to look on the physician as nearly divine. The other night, when Burgess was with me, I was talking to him about my old illness and your care of me. Do you remember how you used to sit and read those long tales to me which have ever since been mixed up in my keenest impressions about religion? Sickness seems to me to be like a plough, which forms the furrows in the memory; but while it does so, a hand ever goes with it, which drops into the depth of the furrow seeds which spring up to the end of time. Do you remember those long drives we took when I was getting a little better, and the first green leaves of the approaching spring so delighted my eye after the thralldom of sickness? The peculiar scents of the early April day; the hyacinth and the narcissus, which you bought for me at the little shop at Chelsea, and those prints you got for me to colour, while my hand trembled too much with approaching health to execute the envied work. Oh those long days, my own mother, how I remember them now!

what would I not give that you were by my side: but I write this not only from a sense that it gives me that I am communing with you, but also that you may know, if I never live to tell it you myself, how very much you have been to me in life. But I must not write more, for this has been written at different intervals since last post, as my strength would bear it. Remember how deeply I am convinced that God's Hand is in all the circumstances of my life, and that the trial I am now bearing is absolutely necessary to bring me to heaven. It seemed hard, at first, to be cut down in the youth and strength of my days; but who can tell what temptations and falls I might have had if I had been spared? It has become my hourly thought now that 'the LORD has given, the LORD has taken away, blessed be the Name of the LORD.' The time that will elapse between my departure, if I die, and your following me, cannot be long; and we shall meet in that as yet unascertained world where, at least, we know there is no more sin and no more anxiety. Good-bye; may every blessing go with you. Your own ALLEN."

The widow read this with strange emotions. While her own deep affection for her boy had led her to conduct and to acts which had raised in him so intense a gratitude and so living a memory, she had been unconscious herself of what she had been doing. True! she had read to him for the hour together; devoted her life to him: been the quiet, unchanging form at the end of his bed whenever his eye opened in his long illness; sold the few trinkets that were given her on

her marriage day to pay for the hired carriages which took him out in those early spring drives ; and walked to Chelsea, on a hot spring day in London, to buy that pink hyacinth and that yellow narcissus ; had stood doubting in the gardener's shop amid all the glowing colours of the year's first flowers, whether she could afford to buy the jonquil or no ; had called the ragged sweeper boy from the crossing to carry them for sixpence, the last in her purse. True ! she had done all this and more : but she never saw round what she did : she never meant it : she never saw its end and result before her. It was an instinct ; not a principle. Ay ! there is the very point. Those *unintending* things in life are the ones that make the impression. Try to create an association, you will fail ; and having failed after the effort of hours, the slightest and most transient accident, light as the wind that bears the feathered seed from the southern to the western hedge, will bear to your mind on its soundless wing something which will leave an impression there never to be erased,—a feeling of unexplained melancholy, a memory of inexplicable joy, which you try in vain in after years to spell into words. The tune we heard when under some peculiar phase of weal or woe ; the glow of sunset on which we happened to look through the dark ebon boughs in the deep stillness of the October twilight, shut up in the narrow lane of the village of our home ; the low of the distant cow, which uttered her evening call in the meadows beyond ; or the dreamy laughter of cottage children at their twilight play in the far distance ; trivial acts and scenes like these will have the power in

after days to awake dormant energies with a power beyond all human ken or control, while we may try and try for years to recall the circumstance which may re-create the impression, and we recall it in vain.

Such was the widow ; and it was, as I said, that very unconsciousness that made her the object of deeper love. I do not mean to say that it is *ever* so ; sometimes the most powerful affections are called out through a conscious reciprocity ; we love because we know we are loved : " We love Him because He first loved us." But never mind ; love has her different ways, and so as she reaches the same end in all her ways it matters not.

The widow closed her letter, and looking on her corded box thanked God she was going to-morrow. She could not help remembering, as she gazed round on the furniture which she had loved with Allen, those words of Ruth, when for a moment she thought of any possible hindrance to her journey, or any persuasion used for her not to go, such as Mrs. Loraine had attempted, came to her mind,—“ Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee ; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me and more also, if aught but death part me and thee. So they two went on until they came to Bethlehem.”

“ Yes ; and,” said the widow, “ if God’s blessed will consent, thou and I, my Allen, will go on together until we come to the heavenly Bethlehem.”

The widow rose, for a gentle footstep outside the door, and a gentle knock upon the panel, announced the presence of Jessy Seymour.

It was on the arrival of one of these posts which had been looked for so anxiously in England and in France, when the tidings of a nation's glory and a nation's loss were expected to be the two wings which bore the bird of fame from the distant scene of war, that among the letters which reached Brandon, one came addressed to "Mr. Richard Dennis, New Pond Bottom, Hatchend, Brandon." It bore a foreign postmark, and that postmark having something in it connected with Constantinople and Balaklava was looked upon by those who received the letter as something of the same kind as the blue ribbon is by the knight of the garter, and the Waterloo medal by the veterans of the last war. In fact, come what would on opening the letter, weeping eyes or smiling faces, whether the seal were black or red it did not very materially affect that question; the receipt of such a letter was an honour and a credit anyhow. And no poor family were more inclined to feel the full weight of that credit than the Dennises. John had gone out with the highest character, and a good scholar; he was Mr. Leonard's servant and attendant; he was a fine young fellow, and he was fighting the Queen's battles.

The Dennises at home were of that highminded, severe character, many of whom we find among the

English poor, who lay all feelings and selfishness under such control, and bear so patiently the lot of poverty, look so respectable, respectful, and civil, that you are inclined to wonder what it is which hinders their being angels ; and yet they clearly are not.

Mrs. Dennis and Jane were at home ; Dennis was out, and Jane took the letter in ; she danced, sung, and examined it all round, held it up for Sally Hutchins to see, who was carrying a baby on the further side of the road ; shut the door, smiled again at both sides of the packet and laid it on the table ; called her mother to come down, and entreated to be allowed to break the seal. This Mrs. Dennis permitted, and the letter was read.

But poor little Jane's joy was soon to be diluted, as she stood with her arms behind her, her bright morning face looking up at her mother, and her brown hair parted neatly over her forehead. It was not from John.

" Sir,—I am sorry to inform you that your son, John Dennis, is taken a prisoner ——"

Up to this point neither Jane nor her mother had discerned the real state of the matter ; and what with excitement and confusion, and with the peculiar grammatical structure of the letter, Jane understood the words "is taken a prisoner," to mean that he had taken a prisoner. Jane's ideas, like most children of her kind, were very exalted about prisoners and captives. Some wild tales connected with Jack the Giant Killer, were among the foremost impressions of the kind. She accordingly rushed wildly off round

the room crying out, "Our John's got a prisoner! our John's got a prisoner! Mother, will he bring the prisoner home? Where will he go? where will he be put? Will the Queen have him, or will John be made a lord?" All these in Jane's mind were the ideas consequent on taking a prisoner, and she was wild with delight. The prisoner, if the Queen did not have him, would be the most delightful trophy in the cottage, and a most interesting amusement for many a winter's evening. When he died he might be stuffed and kept for John's children to look at. But the rapidity of little Jane's thoughts would not let her rest; she had already got on to a chair in the window to gaze out both ways to see if Sally Hutchins with the baby were going by again that she might tell her at once about "the prisoner," but seeing Ballard, the carrier, going by with his cart, she rushed to the door to tell him, when her mother called her off, and with a grave voice said, "Jane, it isn't as you thought, our John is a prisoner." Oh the difference of the active and passive voice! Jane's face dropped, and her arms again went behind her; one arm turned round in the other hand, as she listened with open mouth to the letter.

"A party of Cossacks took him after the engagement at Alma, and he is supposed to be in Sebastopol, though this is not known. Mr. Dennis, sir, I am exceedingly sorry to have to report this of your son, he is as fine a young fellow as ever lived, and I've known him since we came out here, and that's the way as I know your direction; he's a religious young man too. Mr. Dennis, dear friend, I'm sorry to inform you that the Russians are

horrid cruel to their prisoners. But cheer up and hope the best.

Your's abediently,

"RICHARD HUES,

"Corporal —."

Poor Jane !

No change from the sunniest April morning warmed with balmy air, and painted with the colours of young spring, to the same morning when a cold shower of sleet is obscuring the sun and pattering on the hedge-row, could be greater than poor Jane's face on the discovery that John, instead of having taken a prisoner, was made a prisoner. She cried with the whole energy of her earnest little soul, while Mrs. Dennis, folding up the letter quietly, placed it carefully behind a brass candlestick on the mantelpiece, and gazed vacantly in the fire for about a minute, paying no heed to the sobs and gushes of tears which burst from her child. She presently turned suddenly round, and said, "Come, girl, we must tidy up a bit;" and without any more ado she proceeded to lay out the breakfast things preparatory to her husband's return, as if nothing had happened more than ordinary. And Jane dropping her pincloth from her face went sobbing and sighing round the room, fulfilling her own domestic occupation as quietly and rigidly as her brother John had performed his on the field of the Alma. It was quite clear that as long as her tears did not interfere with her work, Mrs. Dennis paid very little heed to them; but seemed to look at them rather as the necessary matter of course from a child on hearing any news that belonged rather to the tragedy than the comedy

of life ; and as having no more of necessity to do with the sorrow of the heart, than the white handkerchief in the hand of the funeral mourners of necessity indicates the genuine sense of bereavement. So Jane sighed and hiccoughed, sobbed and burst forth again over the teacups and the bread-and-butter to her heart's content.

A footstep outside announced the approach of Dennis. Laying his tools down in a corner, and throwing to Jane a piece of wood which he picked up in the road, he said, "Put that away, girl, into the woodhouse."

Jane obeyed ; and Dennis proceeded to his seat by the fire-side. He took out a clasp-knife, and a piece of bread, some bacon, and an onion which he laid between his finger and his thumb ; and then a small yellow bason of coffee without milk, around the surface of which a thin white cloud of smoke was curling up into an upper sediment ; and drank it off ; as yet not a word had been said by any one. Jane resumed her seat, and was sobbing and hiocoughing over her bread and butter ; till at last Dennis said :—

"What's the matter with the girl ?"

On which Jane burst out immediately afresh, and Mrs. Dennis, reaching down the letter, said :—

"Here's a letter about our John, and it has got bad news."

"Ah," said Dennis, not taking his eyes off the clasp-knife.

"Our John is took prisoner by the Russians," said Mrs. Dennis.

"He has never left young Mr. Leonard, anyhow,"

said Dennis, laying down the clasp-knife, and looking at his wife.

"He can't help hisself," said she, "for he's taken prisoner, and is in the great town."

Dennis said nothing for another minute, but went on eating his bacon and gazing out of the window, and then said:—

"The LORD have mercy on the poor boy; he's always been a good lad."

Little Jane again burst out into uncontrollable grief; and few more words were said at that breakfast on the subject. Dennis, as soon as he had rested after breakfast, gazing into the burning embers, at length rose to go; while his wife began to "tidy up a bit." Such was the sum total of *expressed* sorrow which was uttered for John Dennis's captivity.

And was there not the same mighty fountain of feelings, as amongst those, who expressed more readily in a thousand ways the grief which oppressed their heart? Oh yes! he who had just gone out with his spade upon his shoulder, his whole soul fixed upon his boy, felt a silent working of grief too deep down for even himself to syllable into words.

It was late on the same afternoon that Cicely and Mr. Loraine heard the news which had reached the Dennises' cottage.

"Papa," said Cicely, coming in with her bonnet on; "I am going to see poor Mrs. Dennis, will you come with me?"

"I am quite at your service," said Mr. Loraine, taking up his hat.

They set out together with their respective intentions for the cottage. The perplexity in Mr. Loraine's mind was how he should get on in a visit of condolence with a man so exactly like himself in point of character. He knew well enough that Richard Dennis was a man whose sense of duty was so stern that no human emotion would be allowed to find utterance; and if Dennis had a profound respect for any one in the world, it was for Mr. Loraine. Cicely also had her own peculiar work before her—to comfort Mrs. Dennis; and since she knew Mrs. Dennis would not show sorrow enough to be comforted, she shared her father's anxiety.

The father and daughter with determined and rapid steps, though both equally silent, reached the door.

They were welcome visitors; and on their entrance,—for it was now six o'clock in the evening, and Dennis had come in to tea—the family rose.

"Very glad to see you, sir—set the gentleman a chair, Jane," said Dennis.

Mr. Loraine's difficulty was soon chased away by the calmness and presence of mind of his servant. Begin upon John Dennis he could not; so he began upon faggots.

"Dennis, when are you going to cart those faggots in the copse?"

"Dear me, sir," said Dennis, rising up, and looking out of the window, "Haven't they done it yet?"

"I wish," said Mr. Loraine, "that you would see to those fences round the park on the east side; they are so out of repair."

"Yes, sir," said Dennis; "I was thinking about them before young Mr. Loraine went away." Dennis's manner betokened that of the intelligent and trustworthy servant, which characteristic seemed more to flow to the surface than that of an affectionate father; while to the surface of Mr. Loraine's manner floated rather the marks of a trusting, satisfied, and decided master, than those of the sympathizing friend.

"I'll see to it to-day, sir," said Dennis.

Mr. Loraine fidgeted in his chair, looked at his hat, and turned to Cicely, who was deep in conversation with Mrs. Dennis.

"I'm sorry to hear you have bad news of your son," said Mr. Loraine, looking at Dennis.

"Yes, sir; the boy taken by the Russians. He's taken in the way of his duty. There's a God above knows all. But he was a fine young fellow, and never said his mother nor me 'nay.'"

"The Lord bless his heart—no—that he never did," said Mrs. Dennis, speaking out on the subject for the first time since the letter came.

Jane looked from her father to her mother, and back again, and burst into another flood of tears.

Mr. Loraine had broken the ice, and was anxious to act on the advantage he had gained for himself.

"Well, I have no doubt he will be very well treated," said he; "for they say the Russians are very kind to their prisoners."

"Be they, sir?" said Dennis, with a decided manner, as he looked up steadily at Mr. Loraine; "I'd heard as they weren't."

"Oh, yes; particularly kind, I believe," said Mr. Loraine.

"Ah, there now, ye see," said Mrs. Dennis, with a deep sigh; "how hasty people are in speaking against each other. The people have been saying all here about us, how the Russians were such cruel, spiteful kind of people. May be, they're a very civil-spoken set."

And Mrs. Dennis seemed to take comfort in expressing a conviction which was plainly so near her hopes.

Jane looked up, and stared at her mother, and then at Cicely, and smiled.

"Well," said Mr. Loraine, "if I hear any news at all which may affect or interest you, I will let you know; and I am sure if Mr. Leonard has any opportunity, he will do all he can. He speaks most highly of your son's excellent conduct."

"Bless him," said Mrs. Dennis wiping her eyes, although there was no evidence which Cicely had noticed of there having been a tear.

"Let me know if I can be of any use to you," said Mr. Loraine. "Miss Loraine will gladly write anything for you, I am sure."

"Yes; I was saying to Mrs. Dennis, that she had better come up to the hall in the least difficulty. I shall be so glad to help her."

The cottage family arose, as Mr. Loraine and his daughter left the door.

"Honest fellow!" said Mr. Loraine.

"I like that little Jane so," said Cicely; "she is so real and hearty."

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... of the unhearted man.
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... to the actors on
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... are very much what I
... the perfect writer

would be one who discussed keenly and described accurately the individualities of character, this would give him a claim to the knowledge of human nature ; he must also see exactly the way in which in life one character comes across and becomes a foil to the other characters of the same family, circle, or neighbourhood ; this would show good plot. He must be one who can throw around all these the atmosphere of some feeling, be it grave or gay, which such characters and arrangements would naturally call forth, neither surrounding the grave with gay accompaniments, nor the gay with the grave.

We have seen lately a very clever drawing by a man of himself, his wife, and children, grouped before an open alcove in a room, through which they are looking out into a scene of summer sunset, trees, cottages, and sky. It is a striking drawing and conception. But it illustrates my position ; it excels in two of the properties, not in the third. The character and the feeling, not in the plot. The likenesses are true, individual, and distinctive. The feeling is honest, deep, and impressive. The impression is at once conveyed of the love of nature, the blending of the powers of nature and affection, the strength of home associations, and the pliability of children under such influences. But the drawing is slightly deficient in plot ; the figures are doing nothing ; they hold no sufficiently truthful or natural relation to each other ; they are not doing what they would be doing in real life ; they are *receiving impressions*. But people do not sit in every part of life's stage "to receive impressions" for their own

sake. At least, those who do prove great failures. Impressions *must* be accidental to be lasting or useful. The children in this drawing *convey impressions*, but it is equally true that no people in life sit or move *for the sake of conveying impressions*. The design wants the plot of life. All persons of deep feeling, and those possessed of a subjective nature have a tendency to sacrifice plot to the expression of character and feelings. Among writers Scott's peculiar forte is plot; he knows how men do touch each other in life; how one circle of human action usually cuts another. Byron devoted himself to the expression of feeling *only*, he sacrificed on its altar character and plot: while Shakspeare's delineation of character is perhaps the strongest among all his strong points. In ancient days Homer excelled in all three; Sophocles in character, and *Æschylus* in the conveyance of grand and simple feelings. In paintings of modern days Maclise or Ward understand the plot of life, while Danby and Herring are penetrated themselves, and try to penetrate the public with the feelings of life's drama; and Millais with the new school is inclined to express more truly the characters and characteristic portions of the scene. Devotion to one of these lines to the exclusion of the others will generally prove a failure; while true excellence will be shown in the combination; though one element will ever from the natural individuality of character be predominant. Scott and Shakspeare, Homer and Dante, are great because they excel in all three. Danby and Byron are inferior because they devote themselves to one. The effort to study the *plot* alone to the intended

and conscious exclusion of the other two is a fatal mistake. There is a school of writers of fiction of this day whose aim is unadorned delineation of the circumstances of daily life, who make too apparent their aim. It ends in affectation.

The same principles are true of the characters of life. Cicely had plot and character. And Jessy and the widow had—what, perhaps, the following little incidents may enable the reader to decide for himself upon.

Jessy had come down a little later than usual, and Mr. Seymour was waiting for her. He was standing at the window looking out at the dark brown beds neatly cut in the brown turf, and the crocus leaves which were bursting through it.

"Ah, Jessy, my girl, what have I got?" said Mr. Seymour with his usual kind and good humoured smile. Good man! his own mind was so good, and calm, and settled that he could afford to be ever cheerful, "What have I got?"

The colour flew from Jessy's face as she passed the breakfast table and walked up to her father, half, and more than half suspecting what he meant. "Oh, I doubt not you would know. No, my Jessy must purchase that gift by at least double the number of kisses to her old father."

So saying the kind man pressed his daughter to his bosom, and whispered his blessing on her head.

But Jessy's heart was beating high. The words of love, the fond embrace, the kiss she had in childhood

prized as the seal of peace, love, and daily joy, and which now was to her the dearest impression of the passing day, all were scarcely noticed now. She caught the letter her father offered as the prize, so valuable, and laid it on the table, though with a sigh.

Mr. Seymour no more understood Jessy than the sunbeam becomes part of the valley or the tree into whose inmost depths it penetrates. Yet he loved her more than father ever loved daughter. He did not know when or why or how she was sad,—often joked when she was sorrowful, and sympathised and consoled with her when she was more light-hearted than usual. The sunbeam of his love penetrated every portion of her being, but it never became part of her.

This morning he did think she was dull once or twice at breakfast. "Is anything the matter, Jessy? Why don't you open the letter? Are you afraid I shall see a line of it? I will not look, I promise you."

"Dear papa!" said Jessy, smiling, and saying nothing. She did not look at it often during breakfast, she rather shunned the place where it lay. She had a feeling—she could not have told you what it was. But though her eye glanced off the letter as it lay and she had rather have looked at anything else, still, the moment breakfast was over, she caught it up and flew from the room in agitation so great that Mr. Seymour started round and said, "Are you not well?"

"Yes, dear papa, quite," said she stopping, and kissing his forehead, while her quick and uncertain breath told a different tale, "quite well, only—I'm in a hurry." And she was gone.

She hastened down the passage which led to her own room, and she closed the door. That room was her refuge; there the tired wing might droop; there the forms of society, the need of keeping up when the heart is breaking, the necessity of talking when there is no single topic about which we can raise a thought; those kites and vultures which hover over us, are gone. The tired wing may droop, and the bird may nestle in its sheltered home. When Cicely one day asked her an old question borrowed from the suggestion of another, "whether she would like to be a bird because it lived in a nest, or because it could fly to the clouds," Cicely having said, of course, that the latter would be her reason; Jessy said, as she sat thinking with delight at the idea, "Oh, I should like to be a bird because I could build and live in a nest. It would be so snug." And that room was Jessy's nest, and there she sang her plaintive song alone, and the wing of her spirit was still.

She sank back into her chair; she looked round the letter, broke half the seal. She took that other one from her bosom, and read it, and smiled. This gave her courage, and she opened the new one. We will venture to stand by and read with her its contents, and imagine though we are not authorised to say what Jessy felt.

"My dearest Jessy, ——"

And why not say so? What is there in that which can dissatisfy any one, the most clinging? Or may it be that the cherished tenant of that loving breast had a slightly different beginning. Well, what matters it,—'tis but a word—and how can it much matter if a possessive

pronoun be inserted or omitted? After all we do not *mean* so much by a word, and yet we fret about another person's to us, as if it were all and everything. Why, we have known a man fret himself into paralysis because a man signed himself "yours truly," instead of "yours faithfully;" and yet the poor writer had no more intention than he had for writing with the front of his pen instead of its back. Ay! and more than that, we heard of a man who trembled and turned pale to open a letter to see if it began "My dear Sir," or "My dear Mr. Robson," and when the eye discerned at a glance that there were three words and not four in the address, the letter was doubled up and locked up, and not read for a week; and that week, I assure you, was a wretched one. But our friend opened it on Saturday night, and found that he had misapprehended the third word, and instead of "Sir," it was "Sam;" so that the great man instead of drawing back a degree had advanced one; ay! and the degree was to an abbreviated Christian name. And then, oh the misery of having neglected it for a week!—the surprise the great writer would feel at having it unanswered! The heart-misery it might have saved—the——. But we are wandering far from Jessy.

"My dearest Jessy,—I have so much to tell you."

Why use the word "tell," why not use the words "say to you?" Why, Jessy, what difference can there be between "say," and "tell?" And yet to *her* there was, though undiscovered by us, as much as when a cold wind passes over an aching wound in agony to the silent sufferer, while it is as a refreshing breeze to us.

"To tell you of the brilliant cavalry charge at Balaklava; I assure you it was a sight which those who saw will never see equalled. The day was brilliant, and in the early morning those thin mists which seem to crisp away before the stronger power of the sun, were lifting up, leaving that singularly rich colouring which only October gives. On this occasion the colours of nature were intermingled with the dress of soldiers and the instruments of war——"

Jessy's eye was gazing vacantly at the page; she had read and made it all out, but her mind had wandered off it. "Why tell me of all this, what *do* I care for it? He did not use to write so," said she, as with eyes swelling with a tear, she again gazed on the old letter, and saw more in its scantiest line than in the whole page of this last one; and yet the first was about nothing and this last was about something. Ah, but then *she* was the something, *the one thing, the only thing* of which Leonard then wrote—What, reader, do you call that selfish? No, call it not by so hard a name. Remember she would have died—ay, more than died, *loved till* she died for him.—Well, well, we will not moralise and philosophise any more,—the subject is difficult. The fact was her loving eye gazed on a focus into whose minute circle every ray of Jessy's light was concentrated, while he gazed on a wide world of sunshine—and why not?

Then came a good deal about the Balaklava charge; and then Jessy's eye became fixed again, and a smile passed over her face, and her manner became earnest as her glance fell on the words, "*I have been unwell*

the last few days from my old wound, and while I was ill I so thought of ——” and here he had come to the bottom of his page, and Jessy in her eagerness, poor girl, to turn the leaf over, was longer about it than usual, for some strange gleam of hope warmed her mind,—“*home and my dear mother’s kindness in my old illness,*”—and so it went on to the end.

It had dropped from Jessy’s hand, and fallen on the ground, while her head had sunk against the back of the arm chair; her two hands were clasped; her eyes had wandered to the window,—to the old grey church tower, which was looking in at her through the trees so kindly; and just then it chimed with its beautiful bells ten o’clock. Jessy knew the sound so well. As a little girl she used to fancy they said on Sunday mornings, “Do come to church; Do come to church;” and at night, as she grew older, they seemed to sound so solemn and melancholy as she lay awake, as if they said in their clear, unearthly tones, “Here lie the dead; Here lie the dead.” And when she sat in her little room looking musingly out of window, or in that chair of hers reading for the long hours together, the grey tower seemed to look in at her and sing its fitting tune, “The LORD bless *you*. The LORD bless *you*.” And now the chimes sung again their quiet tune to her poor, saddened heart, “Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide; who is a God like unto Thee, Who will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea?”

CHAPTER XV.

BALAKLAVA.

BUT we must return to Leonard. Having escaped from his captors he was not very long in reaching the rear of the retreating army, which was by this time fast approaching the deep valley of Inkerman, through which the river Tchernaya runs, now famous for the awful battle fought in its vicinity, and as the boundary to many a winter's walk of our officers in the Crimea. When Leonard overtook the rear of the army, having passed through the French, he found the English encamping after a weary march on the heights above the river. The long advance over a surface of chalk, covered thinly with grass, with the atmosphere laden with clouds of dry dust, had made the army glad of repose. Weary with his ride, and faint both from the pain of his wound and continual loss of blood, Leonard spent but a restless night under the tent of a brother officer, constantly watching the red glare on the sky above the heights which they had passed, on which Mackenzie's farm stood, and which marked the site occupied by the French troops. As he lay, restless on his bed, such as it was, he had time to reflect on the peculiarity of his position. War, which hitherto had been to him but like a dream of the Crusades, or the almost equally romantic period of the first Napoleon, had now burst upon him in its stern reality; and almost before he had had time to reflect upon it, some of its leading incidents were things of the past. Events had transpired which would glow upon the

page of history with that uncertain light which gives them half their charm, and all their unreality. To the reader of history, or of "the *Times*," the circumstances through which Leonard had passed in the last week were such as to make every actor in them appear as heroes and demigods; and to lead those who read of them to find it difficult not to divest their impressions of them as of men wearing ordinary coats and trowsers. To such persons the very faces of the soldiers assume a new aspect, and the colour or the line on the countenance which four months ago had marked the barrack soldier as a drunkard or a fool, no longer exist in the impressions of the same man in the Crimea. Each regiment presents embodiments in eye, brow, and bearing, of the various virtues in Aristotle's ethics, ranging from "the magnanimous man" down to him that possessed that "inexpressible virtue which has something to do with shame." And yet our "magnanimous man" had six months before beaten his wife, and the other had shown no very inexpressible shame in being drunk; but we find it very difficult to take this commonplace view of soldiers who fight battles, and it is as well if we can let them be heroes; only this sort of thing is sure to occur—an Alma soldier with his arm in a sling walks through your village six months after the battle, you take off your hat to him, make way for him, bow or ask with reverential air about the details of the battle, as if you were Telemachus and he Ulysses, and Penelope with all the suitors were walking somewhere behind. The battle seems to have made no impression whatever upon him; if *he does* tell you anything about it, it is a canting epitome which he has

learnt from some one who was not in the battle, and he ends by asking you for sixpence to drink your health; you are astounded and take him for an impostor, simply because you over-estimated the relation of soldiers to their battles.

A man gets a very imperfect impression, and a very uneasy one, of light, by looking straight at the sun; he gets a much more glorious one by looking at the horizon just after the sun has set; there is something singularly dazzling and perplexing in the idea of a battle to a man who is in it. We might as well expect to find in every cotton-spinner at Manchester the same conscious romance about his factory, as you have about "Mary Barton;" or that every innkeeper feels she is "Meg Dodds."

Such were the feelings which were perplexing Leonard's mind on the night of the 26th. All the features which had made the military portions of Arnold's Rome, Grote's battle of Marathon, Alison's Europe, Southey's Peninsula, or Old Mortality, interesting, through the last five years of his boyish life had now been incidents in which he had been an actor. He had been a Charles O'Malley, a Henry Morton, almost a Julius Cæsar, and yet he had not known it. He had left his home amidst the blessings of countrymen, he had sailed defiantly on the Black Sea, he had been one of an army invading Russia, he had fought a desperate battle, and been as good as any hero there, he had been wounded, a captive, and escaped, and what could a soldier do more? Yet he had no such impressions about the circumstances or himself which he had had about the actors on the stages above referred to. But so it ever

is, acts and the impressions which they make are two different things. We cannot make impressions any more than we can make wheat, but when they do come they are glorious things. If we try to force them they will produce a very poor crop ; and if we do not find them we must not be disappointed.

On the 27th the army marched four miles, but trouble had begun already. Exhausted with a long march, men dropped and slipped out of the ranks, and expired on the chalky downs in the agonies of cholera under the very eyes of their advancing comrades. About noon the first division halted at the mouth of a great chasm formed by two slopes, up each of which the brigades of the light division advanced. Leonard was with the troops which were moving through the gorge. A shell whizzing over the hill and bursting not far from him, the sounds of guns at sea, the continued firing from the heights above, and the clouds of dust which rose on the horizon showed that Balaklava might offer some resistance. But it yielded without bloodshed, and the advance of a white flag announced the circumstance that the famous flank march from the north to the south side of Sebastopol had been effected without placing the army in the perilous position of having no head-quarters. From the gorge above described a valley of a mile long led down to Balaklava, the sides of which were perfectly clothed with vine trees, apples, plums, pumpkins, and cabbages, of the latter of which as the "Times" told us, the soldiers ate plentifully. A small stream wound its way through the valley, along which clusters of trees offered a pleasing shade. To those who could have gained a bird's-eye view of it the

long advancing lines of the British soldiery,—the Highlanders and the Guards,—must have presented a striking spectacle; and when, added to this, the ships of our fleet ranged themselves side by side close to the shore, the magnificent form of the “Agamemnon” towering above them all, the ancestral pride of the British power must have appeared an invincible reality.

Outside the guardroom the garrison were assembled around the old commander, whose dignity of manner in surrendering his sword gained a deep feeling of respect from our men. Behind the town the hills slope very steeply towards Sebastopol, and are crowned by walls and towers.

Such was the place into which the British army entered, to be so celebrated in the military annals of our country; famous as Capua or as Moscow. A name to be connected in the mind of our army and the nation, with the associations of a cemetery or a charnel-house, while time has yet to show what new circumstances are to be added to the distressing recollections. Come what may, no progress of the tide of advancing time can eradicate from the record of history the impressions which will encircle round the description of Balaklava. A gallant army rotting away before the warm blast of disease, or paralysed by the strokes of the inclement and wintry wind, while a powerful enemy resisting every effort at successful assault, stood on the beleaguered wall like a terrible magician waving the fatal wand of misfortune and disaster over the helpless masses; stultifying the precipitate assertions of the English public, and baffling the expectations of attentive Europe.

CHAPTER XVI.

RAYMOND.

BUT it is time we return to Sebastopol, to see what was transpiring there. Our friends had met with kind treatment on all hands after entering the town; so much so, that their impressions of the Russians were completely altered. For not only were they treated without the least approach to cruelty or severity; but they received an attention, and courtesy on all hands, which surprised them much. Mr. Randall was conducted to a house with Raymond in the centre of the city, where, owing to the wounded and precarious state of his charge, he was told he should remain. He received the promise with gratitude. His host was a Russian of some importance, as it appeared, in the town, whose intelligence and good humour gained quickly on Mr. Randall. A room was assigned to himself and his charge, which while it secured their captivity, was as far as might be beyond the reach of danger. That danger was soon made apparently imminent enough. It was only shortly after they had taken up their abode in the house that Mr. Randall had been watching from the window the various groups and features of the city, when his attention was drawn towards a number of people who appeared in conversation at the corner of the street.

The company which Mr. Randall had been watching was composed of men, women, and children, some of whom wore the costume of Russia, and some the winter

dress of the Tartar inhabitant of the Crimea. The sun was shining brightly down upon them and the surrounding buildings, while the ever blue line of the sea was discernible at many points. By the movements of outstretched arms and earnest gesticulations on the part of those who formed the group, Mr. Randall gathered that they were discussing the position of the allied armies. A high interest and excitement, rather than any approach to the feelings of alarm or apprehension marked their manner and appearance. A youth darting suddenly across the street seemed to bring intelligence of more than common interest. As Mr. Randall apprehended, it was of the arrival of the British army at Balaklava, which by more than one unmistakeable sign had been known in the town. At this moment, a whizzing sound in the air startled the figures of the group and Mr. Randall; and a shell whizzing through the air, burst in the midst of the unfortunate company. The effect was fearful and instantaneous. Three were stretched instantly in death, and others fearfully lacerated by the fragments, groaned for help on the spot where they had been talking with so much vivacity; others were scared away.

The awful change created by the deadly missile made the clergyman shudder. "Such then," said he to himself, "is a unit of the thousand messengers of death which are to change joy into anguish, and hope into despair. God Almighty grant us peace! Oh how little those who long inwardly and devoutly for war for the sake of its excitement and its passing interest, imagine the stern and dreadful reality of anguish like

this ! War is indeed the scourge of God. How blessed will heaven be where it will be heard no more !”

By this time several persons had gathered round the wretched sufferers, and bore them to a hospital of large dimensions, which stood near, and which was afterwards doomed to be the scene of so dreadful an event. But two more shells whizzing through the air and bursting in the street from the English fleet, scattering terror and destruction around, soon left the street destitute of passengers, and induced Mr. Randall to repair to the bedside of his patient.

Edward Randall, a passage in whose evidently chequered life we have given here, was born of wealthy parents. He was brought up by an indulgent mother, and a father who neglected everything for the sake of avarice, and was willing to forego for his only son all moral or religious care, for the sake of leaving him a few additional thousands in his posthumous fortune.

Edward was never sent to school, but after having been educated by a private tutor at home, was sent to Christ Church in Oxford. Possessed of large means and the main inheritor of an ample fortune ; with a person prepossessing, and mental powers of no ordinary kind, he was quickly courted by men of fashion and of rank. And though he had the ambition and the moral energy to desire to use his powers with success, he gave as much heed to the calls and claims of society as to those of the midnight lamp.

At Oxford, Edward Randall fell into a set, whose refinement suited his taste, but whose dissipation and extravagance soon led him to the edge of ruin. But they were not men of openly abandoned lives; and refinement ever tends to take off more than half of the apparent wickedness of sin. A slightly philosophic tendency in the thoughts and pursuits of this set, made Randall believe that on the whole and in the long run, they were thoroughly good fellows. A poetical tone of voice and a recognition of the brevity of time, or the uncertainty of life, are sufficient passports for multitudes into the society of the good and the intelligent.

It was the misfortune of young Randall in this set to fall across a companion of the name of Fitzgerald, all of whose pursuits and tastes were like his own. Every loose and lax tendency in Randall was fostered by his friend; and the gaming-table and the extravagant and the sumptuous dinner-party ever found them colleagues.

In an unhappy day Randall went home to spend a long vacation with Fitzgerald. Already shaken to the foundation in his faith to God and his recognition of moral responsibility, and having mistaken the high talents he possessed and his vast pecuniary means as equivalent to personal worth he became an easy dupe for the world.

Fitzgerald was of high birth, and lived in a beautiful estate in Ireland, the inheritance of his family. Beyond his father and mother, the only inmate of the house was Constance Fitzgerald. The lustre of her beauty was far-famed, and her conscious vanity led

her to make the most of her influential attractions. Many a suitor had been rejected by the brilliant but volatile girl. The moment Randall saw her, he was struck with her loveliness, and though every indication was against her being a girl of any high principle, young Randall loved her, and determined at all hazards to press his suit. His own agreeable manner, his accomplished mind, and large fortune, gave him peculiar attractions in the eyes of her father and mother. Fitzgerald urged the scheme, and though on two or three signal occasions he had had opportunities of observing the great volatility of her conduct, and the great lack of even female modesty in her demeanour, he persevered.

There will be no need here to dwell on the various events and scenes in Mr. Randall's life while staying at the house of his Oxford friend. Pleasures out of doors and within marked the passing day, and at all of these Constance was present ; her cheerful laugh sounded in Edward's ear at each turn, and her form passed his eye at every hour of his gay and thoughtless life. He seemed spell-bound by charms whose dazzling and absorbing brilliance prevented his mind in a soberer moment resting on any consideration which dictated prudence or caution.

Yet with half Randall's discernment, it had been no hard matter to observe that the same fascination which bound himself bound others, and the same meteor hope which was luring on himself was luring on other victims beside him. He spent his days rather in a dream than in a state of conscious reality, and had

long since made up his mind that his undeclared passion was reciprocated and recognized, though as yet no actual statement had been made on either side.

It was, under such circumstances, nothing surprising to any one who knows human nature to learn that in spite of his powers of discernment, Randall was so deceived in his expectations, as to receive the quietly announced statement one morning from his friend, that Sir John Lindsay, who was a common Church friend, was the accepted suitor of his sister, and that Mr. Fitzgerald had entirely consented to the marriage. It might not be any way more surprising to such persons that Randall, though stunned at first by the intelligence, would not credit the possibility of his own want of success, and was deeply persuaded that against her will, Constance was the victim of an ambitious father, or a vain and designing mother.

He sought her out after an hour's anxious consideration, and earnestly pleaded a passion and a devotion to which his words had never yet been leant; the fervour of his expression reached the heart of the impulsive being whom he intreated, and the victim of the last man who had flattered her vanity, or made her the object of admiration, Constance consented to the earnest solicitations, declared the compulsory nature of her acceptance of Lindsay, and consented to be the partner of Randall's flight, and of his after life. A few days passed by, and the news rung through the neighbourhood that Constance had disappeared with Randall, and that Lindsay had left in fury the house where such an

insult on his dignity had been passed, vowing vengeance alike on Mr. Fitzgerald, and on the author of his misfortunes, Edward Randall.

It is not now our object to pursue the brief annals of Randall's earlier married life. A step taken in violation of every principle of religious or social obligation could not expect success. The rapidly passing days of their happiness, if such it could be called, fled by, pursued by the phantom forms of suspicion, jealousies, and irritations. The same fickleness and love of attracting notice, which had been the mother of the great fault already, still operated to produce further ruin. And ere long new admirers and new attractions weakened Edward Randall's power to please. Warned of the folly of his wife's career, the unhappy young man took the very course which must produce further misery, and widen, instead of fill up, the chasm. He gradually plunged into gaiety, and in the vortex of the world, he strove to forget the miseries of a loveless home. Constance left more still to herself, gave unbridled course to her folly. Mr. Randall had taken a small estate in Cheshire, and around him were attracted multitudes, lured by his wealth and hospitality, and the charms of Constance. He simply spread out the meshes of the net, which must ere long close in upon him for ruin.

Warned in vain of what was going on, he plunged further and further into the world, and soon gambling was added to the remedies for misery. So five years passed away; in that period Edward was often for months together away from his wife. Possessed of a

noble fortune, there was no difficulty in amply providing for her full desires after fashion and frivolity, and in bearing the even already numerous drafts needful to be made to satisfy his own life of gambling.

In the course of these five years, one child was born, he received the name of Raymond. The loveliness of this child was the one link which bound the unhappy father to his home ; and in Raymond's quick and fast opening intelligence, Edward Randall found sometimes a charm which his home was otherwise destitute of.

A dark day came, though one which should have been long expected. He received a letter when in London, where he had been for weeks pursuing his usual amusements, which stated the circumstance that Constance had disappeared from her home, and that the companion of her flight was one of those whose flatteries and attentions had been undermining the frail temple of Edward Randall's happiness.

Mr. Randall hastened to the north ; his child at least was the object of affectionate solicitude to him, and to rescue him from misery was the first impulse of his soul.

Edward Randall's heart now seared by the world, was nevertheless one which from his earliest childhood, had understood the yearnings of deep affection. No mistake is greater than to imagine, that the sins of life of necessity eradicate affection, they may press upon their source like a vast glacier defiling their waters with the discolourment of their own composition, but

they do not diminish those waters or slacken their flow ; they roll onwards in their impetuous though sullied course ; and it may be that as in Edward's case, they reach a stage of refining penitence, where they drop as a sediment their impurity, and dash onwards with unsullied lustre towards the eternal deep ; the Rhone has its Geneva, and the defiled affection of thousands their cleansing penitence.

It was late at night that a carriage and four horses galloped up to the door of Mr. Randall's house in Cheshire ; the door of the carriage flew open, and a gentleman wrapped in a cloak descended the steps, and walking with a hurried step through the hall, entered the study, and throwing himself down in an arm-chair, waited in silence till the servant brought the lamp.

It was from the lips of his faithful steward, that Edward Randall learnt the degradation and pain of his position. Constance was gone, the guilty companion of Captain Latouche, the officer to whom we referred above, whose constant attentions to Mrs. Randall had been so encouraged by herself, and so culpably neglected by her husband. But what added to the cup of bitterness was, that she had also taken with her her child. The innocent and beautiful boy was the unconscious partner of his mother's shame. Disgust and disappointment swelled in Edward's heart ; he forbade any effort to pursue the fugitives and determined on immediately returning to the metropolis, and plunging more than ever into the excitements of the world. There were times afterwards, and those frequent, when he recollected with feelings of deep sorrow his child,

but for two long years he learnt no trace of him or his mother. Had it not been for the counteractions of the gaming-table, the affectionate yearnings of Edward would have led him to seek his boy. But he seemed spell-bound amidst his hardened companions. Trouble if it does not melt, freezes ; if it does not benefit, aggravates. Edward's troubles only made him question the very existence of Providence, and the very reality of religion.

It was after two full years from the events recorded above that, having some time since sold his estate in Cheshire, Edward heard that his unfortunate wife had been deserted by her paramour, and her father having closed his door against her, she was living in positive want at a distant part of Ireland.

One morning, when he came down to breakfast, a letter in a handwriting he thought he knew met his eye. It had no address, and no signature, and its words were few.

"I cast myself at your feet in abject penitence. Oh, if you have one spark of that pity in you, which you had when first I knew you, have mercy on me. I am an outcast and penniless. I have not one eye which will give me one kindly look. In my utter desolation I turn to you in whose heart I might once have found a home."

The letter bore no external mark of its writer. Edward read it through three times, and laid it on the table by his side as he ate that morning's scanty breakfast. With a deep sigh he took it up for a fourth time, and, throwing it into the fire, left the

room. He learnt again his lesson from the world, and that cold monitor told him at once that the code of honour recognised no forgiveness for a woman's fall. A man might sin a thousand times, a woman but once; and though the door of heaven and heaven's offended Majesty stood unlocked till doomsday, that the weeping penitent might lift its latch and follow the Magdalene over its threshold, the door of the world was irrevocably locked against the efforts and entreaties of any such penitents; they stood outside it, an accumulating crowd since the world began; but the world is the enemy of God, it does not understand Him. "Our ways are not His ways, neither our thoughts His thoughts." The Pharisees said, If this man were a prophet, He would have known that this woman was a sinner. Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace."

The letter was disregarded, and Edward Randall pursued to the last point the life of the worldling into which he had thrown himself. His means prevented the necessity of seeking a profession, and the life of a man about town was equally in his power, and accordant with his inclination. There were moments when the recollections of Constance and his child would cross his soul like painful shadows of beings which appeared to be beckoning him with beseeching hands. But the extreme dread lest by any act of renunciation of his present course he might recognise that the past had been all a mistake, hindered his altering his career, and urged him impetuously on the course he had been pursuing.

It was so that years rolled by, when, by the providence of God the awful and sudden death by typhus fever of one of his companions in sin touched his heart with a sense of his own wretched life, and the emptiness of those objects for which he was wasting all his powers and energies. He at first hoped that time would erase the influence of the occurrence, but it only tended to deepen it; and to shun its haunting form was simply to shun self.

He left London, and travelled for a while on the continent, where the services and the apparent reality of the systems of the Roman Church affected him strongly. He wandered restlessly from town to town, seeking that solution of difficulties, and that rest of mind, which could only be gained by a full recognition of God's justice, and confession of his own criminality. And as yet his proud heart was not prepared to make either admission.

He frequently thought of his child, who must now be growing up to years of discretion, and his conviction that he had so neglected his great responsibilities with regard to him, weighed heavily upon his spirit. He returned to England, determining to make the recovery of that child the practical point of his penitence, and he set himself at once to seek out him and his unhappy mother, but in vain. He traversed all that part of Ireland where he believed them to have been resident. He found still existing in one village recollections of a lady and her child, who, under circumstances of suspicion and sorrow, had sought a temporary asylum. But they had disappeared long since,

and the only trace he found of them was impressions of abject poverty and desolatedness with marks of strong suspicion.

He repaired, though with some unwillingness on his own part, to Constance's father; but he was received with coldness, only to be told that they knew nothing of their disgraced daughter. His disappointment in the object of his search threw him into a state of deeper dejection still, and induced him at length to take Holy Orders, as a means, he thought, of more effectually repenting and devoting himself to the work of God; but having taken orders, scruples with regard to the simplicity of his motive in receiving them, prevented his entering on practical parochial work. The most reckless libertines, if they turn to God, often become the victims of scrupulosity and superstition. He took the house at Brandon, as we have mentioned, and in solitude and bitterness he bewailed the past, and despaired of the future.

It was some time before the scenes of the opening of my story, that he learnt by an accident that his child still lived, was in the British army, and in one of the regiments which was afterwards destined for the Crimea.

Such were the few links which connected the earlier life of Mr. Randall with that portion of it in which we have become interested. It was over that forsaken and neglected child that he was watching on the field of Alma, and he was now kneeling in his prison in Sebastopol.

When Raymond had first heard his father's voice on the field of the Alma, it vibrated through him, as when by

accident we touch a chord of music, which without forming itself into definite tone, summons up in a moment the memories of a long forgotten tune of which it was the key-note. His father's voice, though not having been heard for years, and but seldom consciously remembered in the interval, in a moment awakened a hundred slumbering memories. And as when having dreamt, we wake, and sleep and dream the same thing, he connected the present with that long and far off past, between which there had been such a crowded interval of circumstances and events. But the recollections of the past, were not sufficiently keen to rouse him so as to make him define his emotion, or in his state of pain and restlessness to search further into the mysterious associations which his father's voice had revived ; to him it but appeared that a clergyman had sought him out and found him on the field of battle, and taken him under his especial care. And Mr. Randall for various reasons kept possession of his great secret, amongst the leading of which, was the dread of exciting his patient in his present frail condition.

With these intentions, he had nursed him sedulously night and day with feelings of heartfelt gratitude to God that he was thus permitted to redeem however small a portion of the neglected past. Among the many moments of agony upon his wakeful pillow, he had often recollected the forlorn and desolate condition of that unhappy being, who he could not but feel had, to a great degree, been the victim of his own folly and neglect. It was therefore with bitter and acute sensations that he used to listen to Raymond's mention

of his mother in the hours of his delirium, and the touching and simple accounts the poor boy would sometimes give in his lucid intervals, as if to a stranger's ear, of his wandering home, and the poor, but constant friend of his orphaned childhood.

The fever attendant on his wounds, had in spite of Mr. Randall's kind and watchful care, told fearfully on his sinking frame; and through the long nights of their imprisonment, Mr. Randall was compelled to listen to the ravings of his unfortunate and neglected child. With that keener and clearer view which he had now gained of his own conduct in the past, he could not but reproach himself for his condition, and consider often how, if he had more recollected the duties of the father he might have stood in another position to his son. Poor Constance's fate weighed heavily on him; her loose conduct left him in the eye of society no other course than the one which he had pursued, but he had his passing doubts whether the judgment of heaven coincided with that of the world, and whether it were not possible that a different course than the one which he had pursued, might not be followed for his unfortunate wife. The ravings of delirium, now often high, made Raymond occasionally let out incidental remarks with regard to her condition and mode of living recently, which brought painful visions before the mind of Mr. Randall. The constant reference that he made to certain objects of nature with which he seemed familiar, and to connect the sensations of his present position, enabled his father to gather in a general manner an idea of her position.

"I can't climb any higher, it's agony to me, agony, agony, the wind blows so piercingly cold; I have looked out to the far off sea, as far as I can stretch my neck, but, dear mother, I can't see a speck upon the waters; do, do help me off this rock, it is so very hard; and do let me lay my tired head on your breast; father won't come to-night: I knew he wouldn't, he'll never come—oh that great dark bird that's flying over me, it is so dreadful, and it will not go away! there! there!" and with a loud shriek the terrified boy threw his arms round his father's neck as he stared with his wild and entreating eye up into his face, repeating with fainter voice the burden of his cry of disappointment. "Father won't come again, mother, he won't come, I know he won't;" and exhausted with the violence of the delirium, he fell asleep upon his father's shoulder, while on the table in the small room in which they were confined, the lamp burnt quietly, with its own pale and soundless light, painting with that power which no other artist can attain the outline of the watcher, and the furniture of sickness of the chamber. In Raymond's very sleep, that tell-tale fancy, revelling and frolicking in its temporary freedom from the bondage of reason, went on with its furtive narrative of things that no eye had witnessed, save the disgraced mother, and the neglected child.

"Do say my prayers, mother, to-night, for I can't pray myself; I am so tired, so very tired from climbing up that rock; and don't look so unhappy, your face does look so sad, so very sad to-night; there now your voice sounds so sweet, just like that it used to be. There now go on

with the prayer, I can follow that ; I know the words that are coming : ‘ O seek Thy sheep that has wandered, for I do not forget Thy law ; and grant, Almighty God, if I may have finished my penitence in time, I may once more see him before I die and go hence and be no more seen ’ : see him, mother, why do you always ask that ? I forget, who is him ? ” And the sufferer opened his eyes from his troubled slumber, and fixed them with that inquiring earnestness with which one does who is ill, as he said, “ O yes ! I know who *him* is, it means father—don’t cry ! you do look so like the little picture you wear round your neck ; it does so worry me.” He shut his eyes, and the frown that came and went from his troubled forehead, told how painfully he recognized in Mr. Randall some object connected with home. But from these hints, slight as they were, the clergyman had the opportunity of gathering sufficient information to assure him that though years had passed away since the wretched events that had severed him from his wife, she was repenting of her past criminality, and cherishing as the fondest hope of her future life, the possibility of hearing again the voice of forgiveness from his lips. The effort to gain anything more from his now rapidly sinking child seemed vain ; for the very moment he attempted to fix his attention, that moment the ravings of delirium burst from the unfortunate youth.

It was two nights after the above recorded scene, that Mr. Randall who had been as usual watching by the bedside of the patient and had sunk into that slumbrous state from which it is so difficult for the

watcher to keep himself, when he was suddenly roused by a voice uttering the word, "father," in an accent, which though low startled him. Raymond's eye rested upon his face, no longer restless, but calm and settled; and as Mr. Randall looked round, he was met by the earnest question, "are you not father?"

"My boy, my poor neglected child," said Mr. Randall, flinging himself on his knees by the bedside; "thank God for that question."

"Oh, when you go home do go and see her. She sits by the cottage door as if she was waiting for you all day long. Why don't you go? Some deep mystery has hung over my past life which she would never clear away; but how strangely your voice sounds to me to-night. I fancy when I hear you speak that I see great tall trees with wide-spreading boughs, under which the deer are stalking to and fro. I fancy I hear Church bells on Sunday morning, and many servants following to Church,—but oh! I cannot fancy any more. If there is any reason why you should have left her, do, do go back to her when I am dead. You don't know how good she is, she always prays for you, and as long as I can remember she has taken me with her to Church whenever the Christian people met together to pray. Indeed I do not know what she can be doing now, for we had scarcely enough to live upon, and that little I used to walk to fetch each quarter-day from the Post Office at Killarney. I believe it came from her father, my grandfather—she often used to write to beg him to see her, but I do not know why, I believe he never would, though she never told me the reason, or

showed me the letters. For a very long time I know she expected on one occasion to hear from you,—she used to look so disappointed when I came back and had no letter. Oh! what she will do without me, I cannot tell, and when she hears I am dead, I think her heart will break. I believe I was the only thing that made life happy to her. I believe when she parted with me to come to the war it broke her quite down, but she thought it was her duty, and she thought as I heard her say that it was an opportunity God gave her to show her desire to love and serve Him better than she had done. But God seems to have bid her drink that cup to the dregs, and I shall never see her again in this world. But oh! do, if you will grant a request to your dying child, promise that when you return you will go to her desolate home. Forgive, if you have aught to forgive.—Oh! that little home, under the mountain side. I can fancy her figure now, coming back from Killarney, where she has been for the letters that may bring news of me, and sitting down all alone opposite my empty chair. Oh! my mother, my dear kind mother, what will you do when you hear that I am gone?"

He stretched out his hand to a little case which he had worn round his neck, and drawing it up with his last bodily effort he touched a spring and a little portrait appeared. Gazing for a moment on the features which seemed so dear and familiar to his eye, he dropped his hand which held it upon his father's arm, on which the portrait fell, and as he did so his failing voice uttered the words, "Have mercy upon

me, O LORD, Who hast been a Father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow." A silence for a minute followed, during which Mr. Randall offered the words of the commendatory prayer, and before he had finished it the spirit of the poor sufferer had flown.

In the deep silence of the prison room, during which the faint flicker of the lamp was the chief sound, the father gazed upon the fading features of his child; he had not moved the hand which still lay shadowing and chilling upon his own. The other lay stretched out on the sheet, a memorial of the patient movements of his dying moments; his hair lay disordered upon his forehead, while the still open eyelid and parted lips gave an unwonted yet awful beauty to the countenance, which with the smile which had not had time to pass away from its features before it was arrested by the hand of death looked as if gazing after the spirit which had been its companion for the sixteen years of its earthly sojourn;—like a cloud looming over the orb of the moon, which having through the hours of the night appeared to have made it her silent chariot upon her noiseless career sinks under the force of an unseen hand below the horizon of the coming day, and leaves behind, as if gazing after her departure, the cloud whose lustre gradually pales away into grey nothingness. So in that long hour of watching anguish over the face of his boy flitted the deeper and deeper shadows which hover over the corpse when severed from its soul.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOSPITAL.

BUT while Mr. Randall was thus occupied in tending the sick and death-bed pillow of his boy, John Dennis was also a prisoner in the great town. He had been borne with such rapidity within its gates by his Cossack captors that he scarcely had had time to notice the approach or appearance of the streets. It seemed that as yet the Russians were not accustomed to prisoners. Dennis' quarters were frequently changed, and he was moved almost daily from house to house, though he generally fared well, and found a universal intelligence and kind-heartedness in all his enemies. The very few who were able to speak a word or two of English questioned him closely as to the English, and their intentions; while those who were unable to put their questions in a tongue which the boy could understand strove by signs and signals to gain the desired information. What had most struck Dennis as yet was the extreme cleanliness and neatness of all he saw; the personal appearance of the poorest Russian as well as the streets and arrangements of the town equally surprised him. From the days of the wars of the Greeks and Persians downwards, men have been in the habit of counting their enemies, be they what they may, barbarians, and if the Russians had been assured that the English were "red devils," the English had a deep conviction that their foes were the offscouring of the earth.

But we shall hear better the impression made on the English youth's mind by what he saw, by the letter which he managed to write home, and which afterwards reached his parents.

Dear father and mother and sister,

This leaves me well, as I hope it finds you at present. The LORD bless you. I am in the great city of which there has been so much talk among our people. It is a fine place; the houses are very high, and all white, and the sea flows in through a harbour, on each side of which are two high forts which protect it, and look very fierce, and I should think if any of our men of war try to get past they will find the worst of it. But here I am. You must not think, father, that we are in Sebastopol, I mean the army, I am taken a prisoner by those Cossacks famous in history.

Dear father and mother, do not fret. I'm very comfortable; and if I have done my duty the LORD is with me as He was with Joseph in the dungeon, and in the pit. The Russians are not the sort of people which we hear they are; I am in a house near the hospital, where I am guarded with several other prisoners taken since the Battle of Alma. There is a family in the house, of a man, and his wife, and children, and they are very civil to me; they are remarkably clean, and very quick, and want to know almost everything; they looked all over my clothes, and seemed to want to know everything about me. The man can speak a little English, so he asks me why we have come to besiege them? and whether we think God will bless us? And dear

father and mother, I hope it isn't wrong in me, but I cannot for the life of me say why we *have* come out; our fellows say it is all for the glory of Old England. But these Russians will not go with that view, so I'm dead beat. As to those Turks, I won't believe that we have come to fight for them as some say, for besides being infidels they are such cowards as you never saw. There are several Russian children in the house, and the odd thing is that all their names end with "owski." I can't help thinking, how ever it would be if all the boys in Brandon had their names end the same way, and the master had to call them over every morning.

Dear mother, don't fret because I am a prisoner. I shall get on very well as far as I can see. I am only sorry because I think Mr. Leonard must want me so. But however he'd bear up cheery if it was not for his wounds. Some of the English guns have been sending messages here once or twice lately, and though I am right glad to see them at work, and am justly proud of their force, it does not seem altogether civil when they don't discriminate between friend or foe, and look as like to take me off as any Russian among them. But that's all the chance of war, so I do not care. I'm in the line of duty, and that's enough for me.

I ought to say that three poor fellows wounded at Alma, one a Frenchman and the other two English, are prisoners in the same house with me, they are to be moved into the hospital to-morrow, for they are very bad. The hospital is a splendid building, next door to this. If I can get leave I shall go in and nurse them.

I can't write more now, for I hear a noise outside

which sounds very like a cannonading, and where I am is not altogether safe, so good-bye. My love to all inquiring friends: to uncle Higgs and cousin Sally up on the common: and tell Mrs. Harding that her Joe who 'listed, was shot at the Alma, and killed—poor fellow. Also tell Mrs. Franklin that Bill Franklin, who 'listed, is doing well, and is an honour to the service. Kind love to old Mrs. Evans, and my respects to all at the hall. Good-bye, and don't fret.

Your dutiful Son,

JOHN DENNIS.

A short visit to the hospital soon convinced Dennis that the prisoner fared better than the native. Though the same habit of cleanliness and order in personal arrangements prevailed through the wards of the hospital, it was clear enough that it covered a condition of bodily want and depression which made Dennis shudder when he looked around him and remembered that he might be for years in the hands of these people. The amount of food taken by them at all was small enough compared with that of the British soldier, and the kind of food was inferior, and far below the average used by the commonest labourer among us.

A poor lad, who was severely wounded in the battle, had been removed to the hospital; and Dennis by earnest entreaty had been allowed to go with him, as the hospital was under severe vigilance, and the wards were severally guarded by Russian soldiers. The bed to which the wounded lad was carried was in a ward already fast filling with the sick, and through the long

hours in which Dennis was employed at his work the frequent sound of the tread of those who were bringing in the wounded told that the work of destruction was still going on, and that it was simply removed from the battle field to the streets of the besieged city. The bursting of a shell every now and then in the street, the tremendous shock of the explosion, and the cry of anguish which succeeded it made Dennis often fear for the safety of the hospital itself. He soon found that his work of attention was not likely to be confined to the youth of his own country, whom he had been first interested in; other claimants constantly put in their claim for the relief of thirst, or when the movement of some tortured limb from one side to the other increased their pain. Dennis had no long time pass by before he had large opportunity of exercising kindness towards his enemies.

It was not long after his entrance into the wards that one evening as he sat watching the broken slumbers of the youth whom he was tending, he was startled by the mention of his own name, and suddenly looking round saw not far from him a pale face peering from the sheet, and a hand extended in his direction. He went to the place; and as he approached it heard again in earnest entreaty, "John Dennis, John Dennis, give us a helping hand, there's a good fellow. Those chaps have given me such a handling as I shan't recover for I don't know when."

John had no difficulty in discovering in the applicant Sally's husband, who being an inhabitant of his own village, quickly recognised the voice and face of home.

"I wish, Jack, you would write a letter to my Sally. Poor thing, I left her when I ought to have known better. As to the young'un, why that don't know its right hand from its left, and that's certain; so it don't matter so much about him, as he won't fret, but my Sally will, poor thing. I have never treated her as I should; and now I'm lying here like, I think of it, and there's the odds."

After this speech, delivered in broken accents as his weakened strength and constant pain would allow him, Sally's husband ceased.

"Do you want me to write for you?" said John. "I'll do it gladly, but how is it to go? There'll be no getting it sent any how to England."

"Ay! now, that's what I've been thinking about these two nights. But I think I have got a thought. I've heard as how in a shipwreck men put letters into a bottle, and throw it into the sea, and as how they generally came to hand; and I thought if you were just to cork up my letter and throw it into the harbour, it might find its way either to Sally, or to some friendly ship, who would pick it up and take it home properly directed."

Though the poor fellow's face assumed so perfectly grave an expression, Dennis could scarcely restrain a smile. But he saw that it would be simply hopeless to attempt to reason with him on it, and that to write the letter, and discover some chance for its delivery was the only thing which would satisfy the mind of the man.

Accordingly he sat down by his bedside, and with

such materials as he could get from the Russian authorities in the hospital, he indited the epistle.

"My girl," began Barton.

"You must not begin so," said his scribe, whose school teaching had given him more refined ideas of letter writing, and whose sight once of the Universal Letter Writer had given him a truer sense of style.

"Oh! you know I be's no scholar. I never was. More's the pity. You young fellows have a fine head-piece, and it's a good thing too. A fellow feels it now when he wants to say a word to his own beyond the sea. I always called her 'old girl,' so why won't it do? Maybe if it's opened by some wrong person, they wouldn't stop reading it if they saw 'Sally,' for there's a rare sight of 'Sallies' at Brandon; but no one would think 'old girl' meant any but my Sally."

The force and logic of this remark was not very pungent or apparent, but there was just that amount of quick shrewdness which underlies so much roughness in our agricultural poor.

So John began, and pleased the sick man by addressing his wife in the terms which he chose.

"Old girl, here I be on my back, shot through by one of those 'ere chaps as we came to drub, the odds is they've drubbed me. Sally, my girl, I'm very sorry I have 'listed. The LORD has punished me. I never was no scholar; more's the pity. I hope I shall be a better man to you if I come back, and to the young'un. I hope you do not want. I'm afraid you will find it hard to drag on; but pull on and keep up till I come back, and I'll be a better man to you, if the LORD

brings me out of this place. There's a blessed God sees all. Trust in Him, Sal, and He will not forsake.—"

"I think that's the right word, isn't it?" said he, looking up at Dennis, as if he felt some hesitation as to the use of his terms, though the evident satisfaction which passed over his face, and the correction of his several sentences told plainly enough that he had as much satisfaction in inditing his first letter as the poet laureate could have had in arresting and fixing for ever the lovely vision fleeting past his mind of his friend's tomb in the church where his dust reposed.

"All right," said John, no little pleased at his turning his powers to such definite account, and finding that education was a marketable commodity, "all right"; and the moral reflection was stereotyped and Barton proceeded.

"I hope as how you've not gone to the House, but if you have, cheer up, old girl; I'll come and take you out, old girl; I've been a bad one, and the LORD has shown me now the error of my ways, I'm very sorry for all my hard words to you; when I'm back, we'll go to church, on Sundays, clean and tidy, like Jack Hill and his missus, and the boy shall go to school, as education and scholarship is a tarnation fine thing, that's as I've found out however."

Then came a pause during which the poor fellow seemed to sink into a dreaming state of reflection. John was in doubt whether it was the effects of his exhaustion or whether he was searching for thoughts and expressions. But the silence was presently broken by the words—

"I'm stumped, and that's certain."

Dennis asked if this began the next sentence, but was met by the assurance that it simply implied that the fountain of expression was dry, and that Barton had nothing more to say. The letter was folded, and directed, and Dennis placed it inside his coat, with the intention and promise of seizing the first opportunity of sending it to England; that opportunity occurred more quickly than either Dennis or Barton expected.

Dennis returned to the sick bed of his young companion-in-arms. Robert Watson, who had fallen amongst the wounded at the Battle of Alma, was a youth of about the same age as John himself, but his mode of entering the army, and the present campaign, were strikingly different. The only son of his mother, and she was a widow, left an orphan when quite little; he had been from his earliest boyhood, the delight and dependence of his grandmother, Widow Hughes. The poor old woman, with her wrinkled face, her one blind eye, and her black silk bonnet which she wore all day long, and some people said all night, used to gaze down through the trap-door on to the steep ladder which led to her loft, as regularly at half-past five in the afternoon to see Robert return from school, as any Chamois hunter of the Alps would gaze down a precipice to take off a mountain goat. And as regularly as the old lady looked down, Master Bob looked up, mounted with unhesitating step the giddy stair, and kissed the wrinkled face for peppermint or toffee. And the two

sat together at their evening meal with the butter lying en masse in a yellow basin, and the brown sugar heaving like a cemetery for dead flies with its brown hillocks in the blue one, and the little black tea-pot whose top was tied on with pack-thread to the handle, soaked regularly twice a day. The widow used to look at her grand-child with all the freshness of affection, which, while the cares of the mother quickly bleach it out, the irresponsibilities of the grandame leave in all their brilliance, to the dying hour. After a successful plunge into the brown sugar, which took place every evening, and an unsuccessful one into the butter, which being the second bastion attacked, was usually amply protected by the artillery of the widow, Robert's eye always used to fall on the little picture on the wall, of the 'Soldier taking leave of his sweetheart.' In this picture, a young lady dressed in tartan with a blue sash, and her hair done up on either side in clusters of auburn curls, bore upon the left shoulder the forehead of the young gentleman whose leave-taking was the subject of the picture. His knapsack, scarlet coat, and clean white trousers, left a deep impression on Robert's mind, which was intensified by a view of a great ship, which was waiting at the edge of the picture with its bowsprit curiously entangled amongst the roses of the cottage garden. But be this as it may, the contour of the picture formed Robert's after life, and that there would be somewhere in the wide world for him also a "Lucy" (for his grandmother always assured him that was the name of the young lady,) to dismiss him with tears to foreign wars, he had no doubt.

Time passed on, and Robert grew from childhood to boyhood, and from boyhood to youth. For fifteen years of widowhood and orphanhood, Widow Hughes had shared her three shillings and sixpence from the parish, and her rent-free loft with her favourite daughter's child. Robert loved her: children do realise more conscious love for a grandmother than a mother: and the boy used to walk beside her on the Sunday morning as she went to church, when the silk bonnet was changed into a satin one, and the grey cloak into a scarlet one, with as much real attentiveness and care, as any child in the parish; while she poor thing with prophetic voice would tell of the coming wonders of her Robert's life, as he darted from her side to strike down a yellow moth with his cap, or made a rush for a black-bird's nest that he had descried in the spray.

When Robert was fifteen, the good old lady had a paralytic stroke. She said "it was only that she had tumbled down, she didn't know why." Mrs. Jones next door, said "it was only that she had been faint;" but the doctor said "it was a fit." Doctors differ, but it is much the same in the long run. Robert had a good place offered him in a garden—six shillings a-week and his Sunday's dinner.

"Blessed be the LORD," said the old lady; "He has given my boy a chance to work for me as I did for him, and after all, I sha'nt die in the union; but thank God, in my own bed, and under the patch-work quilt that my poor girl made me before she died." And the tear of gratitude would find its way down the poor palsied cheek, grateful tribute to a merciful God.

The horror which the old woman had of the union was marvellous, "in fact, approached stolidity," as Miss Warren said: "was almost immoral," as Mr. Gray, the relieving officer said: "was downright wicked, and should not be," as Mr. Barrow, the retired merchant said. "Where is the use of having a union, if such as those don't fill it? While widow Hughes sleeps under her patch-work quilt in her own loft, I feel I am paying the poor-rates for nothing. When I pay the carpenter for making my dog kennel, I have the satisfaction of knowing the hound is kennelled; but when I pay the poor's rate, which in all conscience is often enough, I have not the satisfaction of knowing that widow Hughes is housed. Where is the use of yielding to an attachment to a patch-work quilt?"

Thou fool! As much use as in your attachment to your crimson damask, and your kennelled hound.

"My dear, I insist upon it, that the shilling a week be stopped which you pay to Mrs. Hughes, if she does not consent to go into the union." And the shilling a week was stopped by Mrs. Barrow.

That evening at prayers Mr. Barrow's Bible opened at the passage, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me." He turned the leaves quickly over, for he liked not the words, but from the new page there met him, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy," and he liked them no better, and he turned the leaves again to where it says, "The rich man spared of his own flocks and herds, and took the poor man's ewe lamb and dressed it."

Mr. Barrow, you had better shut up your Bible, for the eyes of God are on every page.

But Mr. Barrow did not shut up the Bible, but read family prayers to the servants, and having finished them said, "My dear, have you stopped the shilling a week to widow Hughes." And was pleased to hear that she had.

But that night the widow had in her own old arm-chair thanked Almighty God, who had given Robert so good a place, and saved her from the union to die under the patch-work quilt; and she blessed the boy over and over again, and he went to bed happy at heart, that the work he was doing was good.

But when Robert was seventeen the war broke out, and the recruiting-sergeant came through the village, and the memories of old years came back to the dazzled boy, and though he tried to conquer the temptation, he could not, he yearned to go. And yet when he looked at that blind eye, and that poor palsied arm, and knew that her only stay on earth was he; and recollected how for fifteen years he had shared the widow's mite with her; and when he heard her blessing as she hobbled off to bed, he said, "God have mercy on me, and take the selfish devil from my soul." But the next evening, the tea grew cold in the tea cup as the widow waited for the boy, and cold enough it might have got, if waiting could have made it colder, for he was a recruit, and was gone far away.

For two long days, she sat, poor soul, listening for every sound, and the neighbours did not dare to tell her of what they knew about her boy. And at last

Mrs. Jones did tell her, and then the old lady looked up a moment as if she did not understand it; and then as light dawned upon her perplexed mind, she only said, "What! my boy gone away and left me!" She hardly spoke again till the next Friday, and the cart came to take her to the union by Mr. Barrow's orders; and as she hobbled down the garden path, she said to Mrs. Jones "They are going to sell all my furniture; I should have liked to have kept that bit o' patch-work quilt, for my girl worked it."

And Mrs. Jones said, "if she had not been so poor, she would have bought it for her," and then saying, "Poor old soul, God bless you," she helped the widow into the cart. What her thoughts were as she drove along, I never heard, but she reached the union safe. The patch-work quilt was sold with all the rest of the things; for though Mrs. Jones made bold to step across to ask Mrs. Barrow to be kind enough to buy it, Mr. Barrow said it "was all stuff, and yielding to whims and fancies," as he sprang into his carriage, which was taking him to the station; and so the patch-work quilt belonged to another, and the widow's earthly belongings had passed away. And the passing traveller took not more notice of the cart that drove the widow to the union, than of the carriage that drove Mr. Barrow to the station.

It was that Robert that John Dennis met in the hospital in Sebastopol.

"Oh John Dennis, pray God I may be spared to go home! Oh if I do, won't I work for the old woman: Oh harn't she been a kind friend to me; and how I

have returned it! Oh John! I hav'nt had a happy moment since I left her! But she's dead now no doubt, and I shall never live to see her again, or she me. Oh what shall I do?"

"You can't do better now than be sorry; and pray to God to forgive you, and determine what you will do to make amends if you go back and find her."

"Yes, yes, I know; Oh it all comes of resisting good feelings, which I had then, and letting temptation have its way; it all comes of that: you don't know how that red coat did lay hold of me!"

For several days Dennis paid unremitting attention to his young patient, and between going to Sally's husband, whose recovery seemed highly doubtful, his time was fully occupied. Robert was continually fretting about home thoughts which retarded his progress—his forsaken relative he knew must by this time be either in her grave, or bent beneath crushing penury; the duty that he owed her for her kind and self-denying care of him during the hours of his childhood, became indeed a cause to him of the bitterest regret. He formed a hundred plans and resolutions in the weary hours of illness in the Russian hospital, of returning to make amends for his unhappy conduct. Illness does indeed bring a man to himself, and while we sit abject and forlorn in the hour of destitution or decrepitude, we see that the objects of our desires are but husks after all, fit for swine to eat; and that in our FATHER's house alone, are objects worthy of pursuit. "I will arise and go to my FATHER" is the cry of the healthy minded from the pillow of suffering, and however long may be

the way to our FATHER's house, we shall bear up with courage along its difficult course. That way Robert determined to walk, and his determination was confirmed and strengthened by many a word of comfort and instruction from John Dennis, whose honest mind made no hesitation in imparting to him in full, the Christian instruction he had received at school.

It was part of the trial of the young recruit, that the chance of restitution seemed so very faint. Upon how many must that same conviction press with awful power who are now engaged in the war, when they recollect a neglected parent, or an ill treated wife, or a forsaken child; how keen the anguish when no communication can be made or received, to feel that the grave may close over the object of our regret, before we can perform one act of restitution for the past. But as John Dennis often said to Robert, "The best way to get God to give us a chance of restitution is the determination to make it when the chance is given." How wonderful would this world look if we knew all that was going on at this same moment.

There on the 15th of October, lay Robert Watson, imagining the parish coffin with its gaping lid, the unfollowed funeral, and the shallow grave; the last home of the forsaken widow; and as he thought a tear ran down his face, and he clasped his hands in earnest prayer, he said, "O God Almighty, pardon mine offence and give me another chance," while John Dennis, taking out his Bible, read the story of the fig-tree spared one year more. And Sally's husband,

with his emaciated cheek leaning on his hand, turned towards where the young soldier read his Bible to his comrade, eager to catch something that he might understand, or that might belong to him, and sank back saying "Oh it's a fine thing to be a scholar, but I never had a head-piece."

And at the same moment, sitting by a little narrow bed, in a room with twenty old women, sat the widow Hughes; she was not dead, nor did she live where Robert left her; but her two grey eyes which used to fill with tears of love for her little grand-child had now assumed a paler hue, as stone blindness had crept over her ever feeble vision: and as she sat there on a box, her wrinkled hands quivered with the blue arteries of ebbing life; she leant upon the hooked stick which Robert had known so well in days gone by, and as her sightless eye-balls wandered as if round the room, she would get up, for she had sat there for listless hours, and say, as she hobbled towards the other end of the room that had now become her world, "Ah! God bless him, he was always a good boy to me. I wonder if he is alive now! They say them Russians be terrible folk to the white people; may be I shall never see his dear eyes again and that's certain. But to hear his voice once more, Oh God, how glad I should be!" and so saying she paused and sat down upon another box to hear Mrs. Cripps tell for the hundredth time her dreadful stories of the great war, when she was young, and all that happened to her as she followed her husband, a soldier in the Peninsula.

I anticipate, but never mind, if we could see the end

of our actions, how often we should be encouraged to act more vigorously.

It was Christmas eve, and through December the widow's strength had gradually broken down, she was going out to sea like water that runneth apace, she was reaching her journey's end as a post that hasteth away. There was no one near to care about her, and as she said "she was a trouble to everybody;" and except it might be that her boy was yet alive, there wasn't a soul that would not be glad to see her dead and buried, and she had no wish to live: why should she? for after all life is but a composition of many elements: love, beauty, the future, hope, expectation, gratified aim, satisfied yearnings. They are life; but when they are all gone, and their bright colours bleached out of the figure of our existence by the drenching rains and the winter wind of change and chance, what have we left? except to long to close the eye upon the now colourless phantom of time, and to open it perchance upon some other scene in eternity, where the colours never fade, and the shattered elements of earthly happiness are restored in endless life.

And so the widow thought, though in simpler ideas. A few crosser words than usual that afternoon from the nurse, a rough sentence that her ear caught from the master of the union, asking whether the old widow "wasn't gone yet;" the quick passage of the doctor's footstep as he passed unnoticed her bed, having said "that nothing more could be done for her, except nourishment;" and a remark made half an hour ago by the woman in the next bed, "Ah mother Hughes,

the sooner we are gone the better, for they want our room :” were all the occurrences of the day.

These remarks had not been calculated to make life dearer to widow Hughes, and she had begun to say her evening prayers, for poor old soul, she always said them with her hands clasped under the sheet, as regularly as the evening came round, and she was praying for her boy, as she called him, “ God Almighty bless my Robert if he is alive,” when a footstep rapidly passing along the passage, announced a stranger’s coming. She stopped in her prayers, and fixed her sightless eyeballs on the door as one who having been long watching at an open window through the hours of a weary winter’s night for a loved one expected, but he comes not, and having twenty times mistaken creaking boughs and slamming gates, for the sign of the longed for approach, has become at length callous to sound and almost to care, and yet watches, and at length starts aside, hearing close beneath the casement the well-known footsteps: so she, I mean the widow, leaning forward from her pillow for a moment listened, and then cried out “ It is my boy. ‘ Joseph my son is yet alive, I shall go to see him before I die.’ ” In another moment Robert Watson had clasped to his soldier breast the dear old face, and gazing, for he could not speak, on the sightless eyes he used to love so dearly, looked and wept, and looked again ; and then with faltering voice cried out, “ O God, I thank Thee, Thou hast spared the barren tree one year more.”

“ Yes, Robert, and ‘ if it bear fruit, well ’—O Robert, Robert, my bonny boy,” cried the widow, “ who would

have thought it, I have watched for you more than ever dog watched for his master, and you have come at last. You'll shut my eyes when I die. You'll see me decently buried. I shall have somebody with me that I can call my own, and perhaps when you are dead your bones will lie by my bones. O Robert, I care for nothing now. 'LORD, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' "

But we have anticipated: then Robert did escape.

Yes. But how?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ESCAPE.

It was approaching the middle of October when an important change came over our friends in the hospital, which considerably affected their present as well as their future. Those fitful efforts of bombardment, which so painfully and tantalisingly marked the opening of the campaign, had already succeeded in teaching the inhabitants of the city what they had to expect. Occasional bursting of shells began to damage property and to destroy life, and the terrified inhabitants began already to feel that in the ensuing events there would be no small call upon Russian perseverance and patience. But before narrating the important circumstances which affected our friends within the town, I should say something about the English position outside; since curiously enough, without any intention, Leonard

was called upon to take part in proceedings which vitally affected the status of his faithful servant.

His regiment with the 3rd and 4th Light Divisions, had been moved up to the heights of Sebastopol, and bivouacked within long cannon range of the fortress itself. Thus Leonard had a full view of the city which at this moment had become the object of such universal interest.

The intense excitement had extirpated out of the bosoms of the soldiers the last remnant of their apprehension, and it was only when occasionally a stray shot fired into their position whizzed past them, or tore up the ground around them, that they were reminded of the real vicinity of death. Along the whole of their right side stretched the valley of Inkermann from the head of Sebastopol to Balaklava, in some places 1200, and in some, 1500 yards wide. The cliffs round Balaklava ran precipitately down on to the sea-shore, while the upper ground consisted of a high undulating plain, seamed by deep ravines that yawned into the town itself. The harbour of Balaklava itself, lay in a cleft between high and steep mountains. There is one classical circumstance which should here be mentioned. Half-way between Cape Kherson and Balaklava, the coast line turns back at a sharp angle, at which point was the site of an ancient temple of Diana, which carries back the mind of the scholar to the days of Iphigenia and Orestes. An eye witness of the scene describes the whole of this peninsula of land, when seen under the rays of a warm sun, bounded by the continuous belt of the blue sea, and enlivened by the sight of the white city itself, as in the

highest degree cheerful and brilliant. It was from this site that the cannonade began, under the effects of which Europe so vainly imagined the city was immediately to fall. One difficulty at opening was, the at first laughed at, but afterwards respected device of the Russians under Menschikoff, in sinking eight of their largest ships across the entrance of their harbour, and thereby hindering the co-operation of our Fleet with our Army.

The first object was the preparation of the trenches, a matter as we learnt afterwards to our cost of no small fatigue and delay.

There were certain peculiarities in opening the siege of Sebastopol which make it different to any other siege on record. The city was not invested, and consequently the road from the interior was free for the introduction of provision and ammunition of every kind from the north; besides which, the point of the town which was attacked, being three miles in extent, the space at the disposal of the garrison enabled them to reply with at least as many guns as the besiegers could bring to attack them. Nevertheless in spite of these difficulties on the 17th of October at day-break, the silence was broken by such a peal of artillery as had scarcely ever before been heard; a hundred and twenty-six pieces, many of which were of the largest calibre, opened at once on the Russian defences, and were answered at once by a still larger number of equal range and power. The roar was tremendous, and shook the ground under the feet of the army across the whole peninsula. The round tower of Sebastopol suffered severely by the bombardment. It was during the hours of agonised excitement and in-

terest raised by this cannonade that Leonard, who was called to but little active work, was gazing, whenever for a moment the wind blew aside the folds of the curtain of smoke, at the city with those peculiar emotions of interest and sensitiveness which belong to a youth who for a first time is made conscious of the extent of human suffering in the closely packed habitations of man.

The Agamemnon and the Sanspareil had been achieving great things close to the very entrance of the harbour, showing that our fleet and our ships had not fallen from the prestige of their great name.

On a sudden, a burst of lurid flame, which spread its ample banner on the sky, floated through the air from the centre of the town. Leonard was from a height watching the point, and wondering what might be the sufferings of those who in the building had thus early fallen a victim to our fire. He little knew that those sheets of flame were rising above the heads of Dennis and his friends in the hospital.

It was late in the afternoon when Dennis, who had been sitting by the side of Robert Watson, his mind saddened with that awe which so much more broods over those who are not summoned to active work, than over those whose energies are immediately called into operation, and had been listening to the terrific explosions all around, feeling that every moment might be his last, was startled by shrieks and cries of agony which broke out in the lower part of the hospital. The smell of fire as well as the clouds of dense smoke, which quickly filled every part of the ward, convinced

Dennis that the hospital was on fire. Report had said that at least 400 human beings were lying helpless beneath its roof, whose fate in such a crisis was inevitable.

"Fly, fly," said Robert, "leave me, I charge you; Dennis, save yourself, you can't save me."

Dennis started up; the yells of the wretches, who bound by sickness to their beds, gazed with horror at the flames which were bursting in amongst them made John turn pale with horror and hesitate as to what to do. At that moment the door of the ward in which he was burst open, and three or four rushed out limping on wounded limbs pursued by the awful element, hoping to find safety in flight of any sort.

"Fly, fly with me, Robert," said Dennis, "see if you cannot fly in such a moment." Using one of those almost superhuman efforts of which the human being is capable, Robert sprang from the bed, and borne rather than led by Dennis, made his way through clouds of smoke towards the door.

"Save me, take me with you, for the kind God's sake don't leave me," cried the voice of Sally's husband as he saw Dennis's figure rushing by.

"What am I to do?" said he to his companion.

To stop to save him, with one already to guard and help, seemed certain destruction, but to go on and leave him in his helpless state, appeared to be against his duty as a Christian, and those peculiarly strong feelings which belong to our own people, when they are in positions to realise dependance on each other. His doubt was soon solved by the poor fellow seizing hold of his coat,

with that clinging tenacity which the flame or the wave so proverbially give to their expectant victims.

"Save me, save me, I am not fit to die!" cried he, "Oh save me and don't leave me here."

Dennis prayed to God to guide him in his difficulty, and seizing hold of the poor fellow, he strove to get through the flames; but his kind effort was unavailing: the power of the smoke and flame was too much for him, and he was compelled to loose his hold of the unfortunate man.

The scene was made the more awful by the continual explosion of shells in the street, and the screams of pain and terror which surrounded him.

At the door of the hospital there was no sentinel to challenge his passage into the street. Evening was spreading far and wide its pale dull shadows over the town and the surrounding heights. The heavy clouds of smoke which hung in masses above the city, darkened the atmosphere and made the scene more awful still. They lay like a fog above, and the yellow lustre given by the flames around gave the scene a more grim and terrible aspect, as every minute some screeching rocket, or hissing and yelling Lancaster shot like the wheels of an advancing express train, burst out of the thick air and found its rest in the destruction of some vast building, or in the burrowed soil. The ascent and passage of these vast missiles of destruction were perpetual; and rent the murky air as the shafts of lightning do in a summer storm. The street itself presented an awful spectacle; the terror and confusion of the inhabitants, the heaps of dead and dying already

corrupting the air with their putrefying masses: the quantities of metal which had already begun to accumulate under the siege, and the impossibility of stemming the terrible storm of death which poured in on every side, presented a spectacle to Dennis which he never forgot, and lived in his memory above the most striking incidents of the war.

"This way, this way," said Robert.

Dennis rushed up a pathway which seemed opened to him in the confusion. The cry of the poor fellows, whom he had left behind, rung in his ears, but nothing was to be done. The darkness rapidly increasing, the thick and heavy folds of murky smoke, the confusion and noise around, aided his chance of escape, though the difficulty of bringing along with him his companion considerably impeded his advance. But he had gone too far to recede. He soon found an obstacle in a wall which rose before him; the sentinels had left their posts or were uncertain against which point to direct their attention. Dennis planted his foot against the wall, which offered in more places than one near the ground steppings made by the shivered fragments of shells and the balls which had struck them. Robert could not ascend without his help, and Dennis paused to help him. But at that moment the whizz of a ball sounded by his ear, and it struck the wall close beside the fugitives. The darkness alone aided them. Another struggle brought Dennis to the top of the low wall, and Robert whose failing strength had all but worn out in the effort he had made, failed at the critical moment, his footing gave way and he fell back. Dennis

heard the fall below. But there was nothing to be gained by pausing or returning, for the quick tread of footsteps showed that the certain capture of both must follow.

Having once with great difficulty alighted on the ground outside the wall, Dennis found himself surrounded with unexpected difficulties. The gloom of the surrounding darkness and the smoke, were his principal safe-guard, but through these more than one bullet had whizzed by his ear, showing that the sentinel could despite the murky state of the atmosphere descry the figure of the receding fugitive. Dennis moved on, but he found the ground was covered with broken glass so thickly dispersed as to make his progress scarcely possible except on hands and knees. Here and there huge spikes were fastened in the glass. He accordingly with that earnest longing after liberty which grows with the difficulty of reaching it, and more strongly still when within the faintest chance of attaining it, threw himself upon his hands upon the bristling surface under the consciousness that he was not now going for freedom so much as for life. The sounds of voices were heard closely behind him, but his best hope lay in the fearful nature of the path he had chosen, and which the heroism of the most daring sentinel was not likely to lead him to adopt. He was right in his conjecture, for though the voices came nearer to him, the rattling and whizzing of three or four shots sent at random were the worst dangers in which the Russian guards placed him. He pursued his journey with his hands and knees streaming with blood from the glass. More than once the

poor fellow paused, inclined to lie down and die where he was; but again and again the high pulse of life beat within him, and that tenacity with which we keep our hold upon our earthly estate made him cling to the chance of preservation with the pertinacity he would not have credited before he had been placed in the position he now occupied.

How long he had been in reaching the out-posts of the allies he could not tell, for dimness alike had come over the powers of the mind and body, and his failing energies prevented his recognizing whether minutes or hours had passed away since he had fallen from the wall. The loss of blood had been considerable, so much so as to have endangered his life. He was suddenly startled by the sound of a voice close beside him which spoke in tones of astonishment, "Who comes here?" Dennis recovered sufficient presence of mind to recollect the hazard he incurred by withholding an answer to the challenge, and cried out that he was an English fugitive.

"My faithful Dennis," said the well-known voice of Loraine, "is it possible that it is you?"

John Dennis had issued at the point, close to which Leonard with several other officers allured by the desire to see the effect of the bombardment of the city, was standing.

With a faint cry Dennis tried to lift himself up from the painful attitude he had assumed, but exhaustion and excitement alike conspired to cloud his powers and he sunk swooning on the ground.

Loraine sprang forward and caught up the poor

fellow, and was shocked to see the lacerated condition of his hands, and nearly every part of him, which was bleeding under the wounds inflicted by the glass.

Leonard, with the help of those with him, had him borne from the position of danger to his own tent, but for a long time despaired of his life, and indeed the medical man who attended him with the utmost kindness and care told young Loraine that he much feared that the shock to the nervous system, to say nothing of the loss of blood and aggravating nature of the inflicted wounds, was likely to cost him a faithful servant.

Most faithfully Loraine watched by the side of the poor lad during those few days of comparative inactivity which elapsed between the commencement of the siege and the cavalry charge at Balaklava.

During his feverish nights Dennis in his delirium raved about Sally's husband and Robert Watson. He seemed ever to have before his mind the figure of the former clinging to him in the door of the hospital, and the companion of his escape left to the mercy of the Russian sentinel. The horrors of that night of escape pressing on a young mind unused as yet to transfer itself from the page of story to the dreadful realities that tales pourtray, had been too much and well nigh broken down its fragile texture. Kind and constant nursing was the only chance of saving him from this dreadful state, and that he received largely from his grateful master.

CHAPTER XIX.

BRANDON.

"Dear papa," said Cicely, "I must take this letter down to read to the Dennises, I can't go out riding with you to-day, I wish Alice would ride with you to see the Grays!"

"My dear Cicely," said her father, laying down as he spoke, "the Chase, the Turf, and the Road," by Nimrod. "That book upon my word ought to be in every gentleman's library;" and he looked towards the window. "My dear Cicely, can't your mother take the letter down to read to the Dennises; it is very tiresome I cannot get you when I want you. You really work in the parish as if you were a curate."

"Dear papa, I think I ought to go to the Dennises, they must be in such great anxiety about John, and they would so like to hear Leonard's letter, indeed I must go," said Cicely, as she stood in her small straw garden bonnet behind a round table near the door.

"Oh well my dear, of course I can't interfere if you feel it to be your duty to go to these people, but really for my part it does seem to be unnecessary; I don't see why your mother could not do the work as well, and as she is not very well to-day, the walk would do her good, but however—" on which Mr. Loraine resumed Nimrod.

As Cicely closed the door Mr. Loraine said, without taking his eyes off the book, "Cicely, tell Dennis from me that I'll look in this afternoon to his cottage, I want

to speak to him about that new road the men are cutting down at the lodge, and also I should like to say a word to him about his son."

"I will, papa," said Cicely, as she closed the door and was gone. On her way Cicely passed three small cottages, whose narrow gardens ran down towards the road. Out of one of them Jessy Seymour was coming, she had been reading to widow Evans, who was one of her peculiar protégées.

"Well Jessy," said Cicely, pausing before the gate, "I was on my way to Dennis's to read Leonard's letter about John; it is such a sensible and admirable letter, I quite long to impart its cheerful contents to Mrs. Dennis."

Jessy did not know why, but there was not a single word in Cicely's sentence that she liked; they all seemed harsh and cold.

"What, have you heard from Leonard this morning?" said she, as her colour suddenly forsook her cheeks and lips, victim as she was of some ascertained malady, which she knew no more the cause of, than the flower does which droops its head beneath a poisoned atmosphere.

"Did he send any message to me, because he said—" and there was a slight pause, for I believe to this day that Jessy did not know how to finish that sentence.

"Oh yes," said Cicely, "I forgot, he bid us to give his most affectionate love to you, and to say that he was going to write to you that night, and the letter would come by the same post." "None has come this morning," said Jessie, as her eyes were fixed vacantly on the greensward by the side of the road on which they were

walking, "perhaps it will come by the afternoon post, the letters sometimes do that ought to have come in the morning."

"You will come on," said Cicely, "and hear the letter about John Dennis, it is so admirably written."

"I think not, Cicely. Papa wants me at home to go on reading Disraeli's life of Lord George Bentinck. I think I ought to return."

And Jessy turned to go.

It was not that Jessy was selfish in her feelings, or that she was not really interested in the feelings of the Dennises, but some how or other her mind was ever over-sensitive when letters from the Crimea were referred to.

Accordingly Cicely went on and left Jessy to go to the parsonage to read to Mr. Seymour the life of Lord George Bentinck, while she continued her walk toward the Dennises' cottage.

It was now dinner-time and Dennis had just returned from work; a fragment of cold meat and vegetables, the remains of Sunday, stood upon the table.

As Cicely opened the cottage door, Dennis, his wife, and Jane were seated round that well known cut and hacked old table in the middle of the room. As she entered they rose, and she began in her usual decided tone of voice—"Oh! Mrs. Dennis, I have come to read a letter from my brother, which gives a full account of your John."

"Thank you, miss," said Mrs. Dennis, "we were getting very anxious, we had not heard from John more than twice since he was taken prisoner."

Dennis laid down his knife and fork and prepared to receive Cicely's communication.

"Heard from our John," said Dennis, pausing and looking out of the window.

Cicely proceeded to read as follows the account of John's position outside Sebastopol, to which the family in the cottage listened with profound interest.

"My poor faithful servant has reached me, having escaped from Sebastopol, he has gone through intense sufferings for my sake in order to join me, but I earnestly hope he is now recovering by degrees from the wounds he got by his escape. His patience and perfect quietness are wonderful, and I really believe that it is the result of firm religious principle. He is very badly wounded from the glass which the Russians had thrown down outside their town in order to intercept the escape of any prisoners from the fortress. His conduct throughout all he suffers is the admiration of the regiment. He is continually anxious as to what the news may be that may reach his own home in England. Tell them I have little doubt that he will return to his native land. It is most striking to see the way in which the habits of early education have their hold upon his conduct, and influence him through his hours of trouble. I regret to say he has been compelled to leave behind him in his attempted escape many of those who are connected with our village, and whose names you will know, and who, I fear, now will no more be seen by their friends at home; amongst others is Sally's husband, poor fellow, he seemed little fit to meet his awful end. Tell my dear mother that it is my great delight when

sitting by John's sick bed to read some of those stories she gave me to carry out ; or to tell those tales from memory which are so mixed up with the recollections of my own childhood and with her voice, I see they have a great effect upon him ; who can say what the power of association is in connection with the acts of our childhood, and how much of our after-life is affected by those memories ! I hear John constantly referring to the good example of home and the influence of school. Tell Cicely she cannot do better than to go on with those good schemes of which I know she is so fond, in visiting the sick, and teaching the children in dear old Brandon."

" Ah ! Master Leonard was ever a gentleman," said Dennis, who had been gazing through the window during the recital of Leonard's letter ; " he always was a gentleman ; ' handsome is as handsome does ; ' and I know there is no one for whom our John would sooner sell his life than for Master Leonard. ' "

CHAPTER XX.

LEONARD.

THERE are moments in our life in which we are the victims of feelings over which we have no control. They are brief and transitory, uncertain and unaccountable as the source from which they spring ; contradictory to the general flow of character, like those ripples which a

sudden gust of adverse wind will blow up on the surface of a stream, and drive in a direction counter to the course of the mass of onward waters. And yet those very feelings or sensations, however brief, sometimes appear in the retrospect to be more ourselves, more the real being with which we are identified, than those longer stages of our existence which seemed at one time to be the only reality. So there are moments of passing sadness and sorrow chequering cheerful days which often appear afterwards to be more *ourselves* than the happier hours : and there are hours of calmness, moderation, and self-restraint, which appear afterwards to be the real normal condition of the character, more than the excitability which generally seemed to be its motive spring.

How powerfully sometimes those fleeting moments affect the future ! How forcibly sometimes those distant shades on life's scene, seen very far behind, remain in intensity and force long after the brighter lights have proved transient, and have paled down into an almost colourless hue !

Leonard was by nature gay and happy. No care sat long upon him. No joy excited him beyond the moment of its rapid passage : he was ever led by high principle and a firm desire to do right. But he acted very unconsciously, and seldom dwelt upon the motives of his own actions. All loved him who knew him : his veracious and intelligent eye, his laughing good-natured face, his wide and thoughtful brow, his hair, which as a boy luxuriantly curled round his head, lent a brilliance to a countenance which some might not have called handsome. His affections were tender, real, and sin-

cere ; he was not hindered or accelerated in them by the influence of others, and neither feared to show at seventeen a real affection for his mother, nor shrunk from owning that few had more influence with him than Cicely. He had been Jessy's playmate, and they had grown up together ; she clung to him, and he supported her : he sincerely loved her, and when boyhood ripened into youth, it seemed but natural to him to transfer the ardent admiration and devotion of the boy, into the deep and more silent love of the youth. Still he was impressible with other sensations ; he *could* be gay when Jessy was away, and cheerful when some unexplained sadness or some jealous pertinacity of Jessy's might have for some passing hour made her seem to withdraw into herself. He did not see the eye which followed him round the evening room from some retired corner, nor hear the suppressed sigh which breathed its unuttered complaint when Leonard could be gay and joyous, though Jessy's smile was not his light, and Jessy's voice his joy. He *could* be happy because others laughed with him, and could find enough to interest him in others, if Jessy could not in some perverse woman's mood be the source of his joy.

Well, reader, if Leonard were a little vain, if he cared for admiration and could take pleasure in the smile of beauty or the homage of intelligence, why care for him less ? were it never the same with you ?

Here is a specimen of what I mean.

The sun shone in through the window on the joyous breakfast table at the hall. The sun of one October morning.

"Oh let us go to Oxhey, and have a whole day in the woods," said Cicely.

"Oh yes, do, admirable," said Leonard, "do, the whole day. We will make a fire and have dinner there, and Jessy shall be a gipsy and dress like one, I declare," said Leonard starting up and taking Jessy's hand he looked the love and admiration he felt.

"I can't go to-day, dear Leonard," said Jessy, looking down, "I can't go, for I am not well. "But—you go—" yet the tone plainly enough meant that she would try her strength, and the emphatic yet wavering voice implied that in her deep soul, oh what joy, what delight would that warm loving heart have felt if through that livelong day, while the rest were at Oxhey, Leonard would have chosen to be alone with her, wandering among hazel woods, reading in shades under October trees while insects mused upon the hairy sunbeam, or sat with her at her window at the parsonage, singing to her lute with those deep tones which Jessy knew so well! But no, Leonard was for Oxhey, and said at once, "Yes, I shall go; oh do go, Jessy, are you really unwell?"

"Yes, Leonard, I must stay at home."

"Don't press Jessy to-day, Leonard," said Cicely, "she *ought* not to go, it would be very imprudent, she is better at home."

"Oh I am not going to stay in," said Jessy, "it is not that, I am going out in the village," and the tone told well enough that Cicely's coming in to the aid had not mended matters.

The bustle of that happy morning all those know

who have spent bright October days in Oxhey wood; who love the fading boughs gilded by the sunbeam, the strong green smell of decaying foliage giving out its last fresh odours under the expiring beams through wounds opened by the early frost of last night; who love the sight of hordes of insects gleaming in rays of sunlight and alcoves of shade dressed in the light jewelled garments which have only shone to-day with all their lustre, as if the insect world were gathered to a farewell revel given by the sunshine to the world it was about to withdraw from. Those know it who love the substantial air crisp with departing mist, and the crimson berries gleaming like the colours of Saracen architecture on the high hawthorn hedge.

All this Cicely knew, and Maxwell, Alice and Grace; all these Leonard delighted in, and Jessy used to love, but to-day she would not come. Leonard did not or he would not care, and Jessy knowing not the cause of her suffering, wished he would only be a little sad because she was not to be there. Oh how deeply hidden the cause of joy or woe in woman's love and woman's peace!

The shout of the little party was echoing at the edge of S. Mary's hill lane. Maxwell was already hot, and Grace was already patiently and silently tired. Cicely had already condemned the arrangement of the basket, and Alice had already rushed into a pond to escape from Maxwell's persecution. The book had been forgotten which they had meant to read aloud in the wood, and Leonard ran back after it; it was "Ellen Middleton," and Jessy had found it lying on the table in the drawing-room when all had gone and she was

wandering through the deserted house ; she had taken it up scarcely knowing why, perhaps because last evening Leonard had been reading it, or perhaps because in its fevered scenes and agonies she found a food for her own restless mind. There was a balcony in the Hall with a roof and awning like those beautiful houses on the borders of Maggiore, which you gaze at as your boat rocks on the sleepy water of the lake in the burning August sun, when you have just come across from *Isola Bella* and touched at *Isola Madre*, and hot, tired, and thirsty you gaze at sloping roofs, and are roused from your lethargy to action and energy by the cry of grapes or figs, which lie oozing with purple blood beneath the wounds inflicted by the sunshine. Bright mocker of the race of man ! to wound and let the life blood out of those whom for years it was its work to bring into existence and to cherish through life ! Like those roofs, the balcony awning stretched out. The view was lovely, a long sloping sward ran down from underneath the balcony, and then arose high trees of elm, and ash, and oak, and stately cedars, standing off in solitary pride ; here could be seen the tower of Brandon church ; a little further the tower of the neighbouring village of Bushey ; and far away, the hills which bounded the edge of the scenery.

Here Jessy and Leonard often sat and read through the long summer's afternoon, or mused in talk through the light evenings, or gazed in delight and wonder on the vast shield of the moon, as she rose in speechless majesty between the dark and spreading boughs of the cedars. Here sad and restless Jessy had flung herself to-day, and with her head leaning back against the

wall, her long curls falling neglected over her shoulders, her hands clasped, and the book open on her knee, she was gazing on it or vacancy, she did not know which, nor cared.

A footstep quick and hurried passed under the balcony, and the next moment Leonard's quick voice asked the servant below for "Ellen Middleton." He had left it in the drawing-room and it was not there. Jessy did not move, why should she? The colour came and fled from her face, and her heart beat high; she listened to the retreating sound of that footstep now loud, now low as it came and went, as we listen to the distant flow of waves in the night, each one of which may bring to land the boat which bears one we love and long for. The footstep came along the passage leading to the balcony, and Leonard burst in. Jessy did not move, yet her eye fixed on Leonard that searching anxious look which woman only can give, and of them those only who truly love. "O, Jessy, are you here? Do you know where 'Ellen Middleton' is; we have forgotten it, have you seen it?"

"O yes, I have it here," said Jessy pointing to the book and smiling.

"O never mind, Jessy dear! I will go and fetch another; how I wish you were with us, the day is so lovely and everything looks so gay." A tenderness of manner and tone, and the way in which his eyes were fixed on her so bright with their speaking intelligence, brought back on the instant to Jessy's heart and manner that quiet and happy life which drooping flowers show when through a spring afternoon the warmer

sunshine has cherished their brief being into colour, strength, and radiance; and then each opening petal baring its sweet bosom to the ray, with leaf expanded and with odours breaking out on the kind air, the little nursling pours forth its strain of gratitude to its guardian beam, as if nothing could too largely pay its debt of grateful joy to its benefactor. And what on that fleeting instant would not Jessy have given Leonard for that look, that word of love. The pangs of the past multiplied a thousand fold, the anguish of the melancholy loneliness of the last few hours, all, all were nothing now; the flower was rising on its stem full with life and light and glory.

She did not move, but her speaking eye told the unuttered story of her bursting heart.

"O well I mustn't wait, there's Bushey church clock striking eleven. Cicely will be so vexed. I must go; I will take 'Mary Barton' off the drawing-room table. Good-bye, Jessy, dear." And he was gone, and his footstep rapidly echoing on the velvet turf and the distant gravel-walk.

And Jessy was again alone and "Ellen Middleton" lay at the same page before her; and Bushey clock had struck twelve, and Jessy still was there.

O how chilling to the flower is the dark cold hail-storm which evening brings up when eternal sunshine seemed to have dawned upon it. You know it, reader, who have stooped to gaze upon the lowly blossom.

"Jessy, Jessy," cried the voice of Mr. Seymour, "where are you? Dear child, why do you sit out here with nothing on and the cold October air so raw?" said

her affectionate father, as he found her sitting where Leonard left her.

"Coming, dear papa," said Jessy smiling, "coming directly," and she rose, carried "Ellen Middleton" back to the drawing-room, and took Mr. Seymour's arm. "How beautiful these dahlias are, my child, I wish Potten would give us some of those pale yellow ones, gardeners are so fond of the purples and reds."

"Yes, I will speak to Potten and ask him to beg Mrs. Matson's gardener to give us some more of the purple and red ones, dear papa;" and Jessy and Mr. Seymour went on their October walk.

But I have been dwelling long on a retrospect.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BATTLE OF BALAKLAVA.

TO-DAY Leonard was in one of those more pensive and saddened moods in which the memories of the past come over us with gushing sweetness and something of sadness. The effect of his wounds, the re-action from the excitement of battle, the illness of Dennis, the general awe which hung over the events and scenes around him, made him think more than usually of home, and among the bright forms and eyes which looked at him through the soft mists of the distant and the past, were those of Jessy Seymour. It was evening and he was alone; Dennis was lying sleeping in Leonard's tent,

The evening was still and quiet, and for a few hours the activity of the siege had subsided. He was by himself and he mused on the past. Death might be near, how near? How many a poor fellow who had come out flushed with hope and expectation, now lay cold and still by the banks of the Alma, the last chance of penitence gone, and their eternity settled!

Eternity came before him with startling awe, and he grew cold and his heart beat as he thought of the endlessness of the other world. In that wild instant anything which felt like home, background, repose, refuge seemed happy to him; some scenery which would not slide and shift with the changes which started up before him. Home was that. Jessy, especially she was home; so trusting, so confiding, so full of love to him, so yearning yet so diffident. "Oh, Jessy, how could I ever undervalue your kind, your tender love to me." Then she came before his mind as he imagined her in her room at the parsonage, or alone amid the merry group in the hall, her mind absorbed in him, and her affections all winding round him, so that the very idea of one of the tendrils being forcibly severed was akin to madness.

He seemed astonished that he had not been more conscious of his love. He took from his bosom a letter of hers which he had always kept, and read its words which seemed to come from no usual love, and as he read it, his heart glowed towards her in a way in which it had never before. "Oh Leonard, what shall I do now that you are gone? I dare not think of the long, long, uncertain future. I shall fit my little room up

with everything to speak of you ; your books, Leonard, on my table ; your marks left in 'The Deserted Village ;' your own copy of 'In Memoriam,' shall always lie in the same place. I hope I do not worry you with all this, do forgive me if I do ; you do not need, I daresay, to write so much as I, but you know I am different, I *must* tell all I think and feel, for I cannot be always thinking all alone. You need not read my long letters, if they are too long, more than once, or even that if you have not time. But still I had rather *write* it all. Only think the first thing dear old Mrs. Tilly said to me when I went in the other day, was to ask if you had been hurt at the Alma. I hardly thought she had memory enough to put the two things together. But she called you, 'Dear Mr. Leonard,' and talked about you to me I cannot say how long. That little kitten which you gave me is growing fast, she wears a red collar which I have made her, and she sits on a stool at my feet, and when I cannot go on reading or writing and get tired of looking out at the grey tower, I talk to her and she has learnt to look up at me and I think she knows your name too when I speak it. I wonder when you will return !" Yes, every line, every sentence was of him. Leonard closed the letter and placed it where he had taken it from. He had got back to his tent, and in his saddened and affectionate mood sat down to write to Jessy. Poor Jessy ! what would she not have given to have got *that* letter. But she never had it, an accident hindered its reaching England, or what might it not have saved !

But it was written, and it was such as man can write

when circumstances bring up to the surface the deep undercurrent of the soul, and when he tells the tale which he has hitherto been reserving.

Dennis still slept in the tent, and night had sunk along the ridge of hills, and over the distant outline of the sea. The tents lay spread around, the tread of sentinels was heard in the distance; and every now and then the explosion of a shell, or the whizz and whistle of a shot burrowing along, reminded Leonard how different his position was at that time to what it had been when he wandered with Jessy through the parsonage gardens or over the grassy commons round Brandon.

It was in no mood of very warlike energy that Leonard sat down in the tent and wrote to Jessy, and with no mere transient fancy that he longed to be able for one minute to fly away as fast as his own thoughts, and be by Jessy's side: but events were on the eve which would soon enough restore the exciting interest of the past scenes and refurbish the soldier's armour. A day ever memorable in the history of English warfare was at hand, and which will make posterity hesitate as to the wisdom of an act which while it added such honour to our army, added such sorrows and losses to our homes.

At day-break on the 25th of October, the Russian guns on the hills and in the valley which stretched along the eastern line of the British position opened a tremendous cannonade upon a few out-posts of Turks who were left to guard it. A large army amounting to about 30,000 men had been hovering over the English under General Liprandi amongst these hills. Leonard was

at this moment asleep in his tent, having spent a great part of the previous night in watching Dennis and writing his letters alluded to. He was inclined to be vexed with himself and everybody around him. Loss of blood, and the result of reaction had reduced much of his military ardour. The recollections which had been forced upon him of the neglect he must have seemed to have shown to Jessy, pressed upon him, and he longed to solve the difficulty by being at home. The sound of the cannons reawakened the slumbering excitement—he sprang on to a horse, and with a Captain Blake who occupied the next tent to himself, he rode down as hard as he could in the direction of the cannonade. It was at first a sight of some confusion. The Turks placed at intervals with scanty bodies were ill-prepared in numbers or courage to face such a foe, and having fired a volley into the air had taken to their heels, and were flying with precipitation over the parapets and down the slopes with the Russians galloping after them with a body of 3000 cavalry.

It was at this moment that Leonard and his companion had reached the opposite eminence. The Turks in rapid flight cut but a poor figure for the descendants of that great Othman who had passed over the neighbouring territories four centuries before, or of the Bajazet and Amurath, whose victorious legions of turbaned warriors, had made the western world quake with alarm and expectation. Poor imitators of the heroic deeds of those illustrious guards, who once defended with undaunted spirit the Turkish throne, and punished with instantaneous death the first of their numbers who even

by a word of advice appeared to cast discredit on the Janissary.

But there was no mistake on this occasion as to the altered position of the Turks: for they fled in all directions.

The morning was very misty, but still sufficiently clear for those who were attracted by the sound of the cannonade to see the considerable bodies of troops which were advancing along the undulating country.

A troop of horse artillery and Scotch Greys were coming up from Balaklava. They found themselves exposed to an overpowering fire and were compelled to retire with a great loss of horses, and a few men. The gallant Captain Maude was severely wounded by a shell which burst in his horse. The Russians were advancing, and in the intervals of their regular columns the forked flames indicating the presence of their artillery flared on the mist. But their shells which were fired at the troops on the hill, most of them burst short of us. From the position which Leonard and his friend were now occupying they could see down into the plain, which was shut in by the surrounding hills covered with grass—in the centre of which as the smoke from the batteries cleared away, English cavalry were noticed advancing rapidly against the Russians, like the figures of a magnificent tournament of days gone by, tilting in the presence of multitudes of anxious spectators. The tournament of this day was for a mighty prize, the contest between East and West for the predominance of despotism or civilisation.

The Scotch Greys and Dragoons who were charging

in front were swept back, scattered like drops of scarlet foam by the vast onward billow of waters. The 4th Dragoon guards advanced and buried themselves in the advancing Russians, to the astonishment of Leonard and those that were gazing on the splendid spectacle. At this moment, the Russians suddenly gave way and fled in their turn over the slopes of the hills pursued by our victorious Dragoons and Scotch Greys.

Not far from where Leonard was our Light cavalry, which had not yet been engaged, advanced to the edge of the hill, from which point they looked down on the Russians who were trying to rally from their discomfiture.

"It's a fine sight," said Leonard, "is it not, Blake?"

Up to this moment they had waited in breathless stillness.

"It is indeed," said his companion, "but what is going to happen? there seems a movement amongst our Light cavalry yonder. Surely they are never going to attack the enemy with such odds against them."

"See," said Leonard, "see, there is some one just leaving Lord Raglan, there is something in the wind. It is a tremendous sight, the Russians look sufficient to overwhelm us."

By this time the last remnant of the morning mist of October had curled away, and the brilliant sunshine in that time of year so peculiarly gilt with colour, lit up the scene.

"They are going, any how," said Leonard, letting his rein drop on the horse's neck and gazing at the point from which the cavalry were just dashing on their celebrated charge under the orders which Captain

Nolan had brought back from the commander-in-chief.

Nolan's figure was conspicuous to Leonard in front of the advancing charge. He suddenly stopped, and turning his horse round, galloped back. He had received his death wound from a shell which burst close to his breast, and uttering cries of anguish, which those who heard never forgot, he rode back until unable to ride any further he sunk from his horse and fell dead on the turf. But on went the cavalry, the whole Russian force before them, an immense body of cavalry opposed to cut off their retreat, and heavy artillery fire crashing into them from every side. They charged through all with desperate courage, and having taken the guns they were commissioned to capture, they turned to return. But like a herd of stately deer who had rushed into the thick glade of an impervious wood, and only turn to see the boughs and trees which yielded to their impetuous and onward charge, had risen up in quadruple numbers to hinder their return, so having gallantly seized the guns, our men gazed back upon a forest of cavalry and cannon which closed in upon them from every side. Whilst the Cossack with his lance waited to bear to the earth each victim who might be severed from his comrades, or reel in his saddle from a partial wound.

"What are those?" said Leonard, pointing down to a small body who emerged from the enemy, gleaming in the sunshine with the scarlet of our uniform, "I have not noticed them before."

"Why it cannot be," said Blake, "but yes, it is

the remnant of the light cavalry." And so too truly it was. All that remained of that heroic band emerged as from a dark cavern in which they had left their comrades into open day a mere handful of surviving heroes.

It was, indeed, too true. Our light cavalry, with a few exceptions, were cut to pieces. Leonard and his companions gazed on the spectacle, while a thrill of astonishment and mingled alarm ran along the whole line of spectators.

We must for a moment follow the course of the charge.

The enemy had risen in their front and on either flank, and poured in a murderous fire. Yet on they rode. Every few seconds fresh horses started riderless away, either leaving their riders to perish beneath the lance of the Cossack, or dragging them dead at their heels. Those who rode felt nothing but a wilder and wilder excitement, which urged them on to more and more desperate acts of courage and desperation still. Allen was among them, and showed a calmness and firmness which astonished all around him. The cannon rose close before him, which it was their aim and object to capture; he had ridden on with two young companions now for half a mile at a rapid pace towards the point of death. The terrible harvest of destruction lay in heaving swathes around them, and every minute, as before a sickle, the lines of men seemed to drop on to the ground around them; still they rode on. The air was in one perpetual commotion with the storm of balls which fell in front and on either side like

an iron hail storm. A minié ball struck Allen's horse in the forehead, the animal reared and fell back, a riderless horse was starting by with the mark of blood on the hair from which the hand of its master had just dropped powerless in death. Allen caught it as a Cossack was dashing at him with his lance. He leapt into the saddle and the spear of the Cossack pierced the animal whose heaving carcass lay on the ground. On Allen rode. Captain Webster was on one side of him, and a youth of the name of Cameron, on the other.

"Poor Elliott!" said Webster. Allen looked around. Captain Elliott, a tried and valued friend of his and many of the troop, was in the act of falling; a ball had pierced his throat, and the gurgling sound of struggling respiration struck on the ear for the instant above the whiz and whirr of balls.

"It is glorious work," said Cameron, his face flushed with excitement; "they will hear of us at home, anyhow."

Allen's lips were compressed, the moment so full of excitement was nevertheless to him full of awe. He did not turn to look at Cameron. "Here comes a lot of these fellows," said Webster, as close in front a body of Russian cavalry bore full upon them; in an instant there was a clash of swords, and a struggle.

"Oh my God," cried Cameron's voice, as Allen who had just burst through the cavalry, looked round and saw Cameron struck with his death wound across his face, he was falling forward on to the neck of his horse.

"Poor fellow," said Webster.

But they were at the guns. The gunners were sabred, and the guns cleared with a gallantry and courage which will remain on the page of history as among the noblest records of British daring.

But the most tremendous work lay before them—the return—This was indeed formidable, through an enemy which had rapidly thickened on the rear of their advance, it would be no small work to mow their way. Allen turned with Webster. A cannon ball struck the latter, carrying away a large portion of his arm, sleeve, flesh and bone between the shoulder and elbow, leaving the lower part attached by a narrow strip of flesh and cloth; still he rode on by Allen pale and firm. How they reached the end of that ride Allen could never tell, all he knew was, that before he did reach it, Webster had dropped from his saddle with the same silent determination and reserve with which he had ridden all along. Allen heard afterwards that the poor fellow had been found bayoneted in twenty places by the Russians, who found him still living. At the very last plunge Allen was struck by a ball which contused the shoulder; he was scarcely aware of it at the moment; but he fainted away when getting off his horse close before Leonard, who had been watching the trooper as he emerged from the terrible harvest of death.

The light cavalry had lost ten officers and one hundred and forty-seven men killed or missing, eleven officers and one hundred and ten men wounded, and three hundred and thirty-five horses lost. The heavy

brigade lost throughout the whole day nine men killed, ten officers and eighty-seven men wounded, and forty-six horses.

The whole odium fell at first on the Turks who had run away, but it is doubtful who could have done otherwise except with a courage which the Turks no longer possess. Scattered here and there to guard slight field works with no support within common range, and attacked by the army of the enemy, there was little chance for them, and few others would have acted in a different way. The works nearest our heights were so weakly constructed as to be rather a cover for the defenders than an obstacle to the assailants.

Many of the poor fellows were bayoneted in their attempts to save the works. The affair ended in their discredit and the disgrace of their generals.

So ended the battle of Balaklava, one which will ever remain amongst the most remarkable deeds of glory which the British army has performed.

The reputation of the Turks so damaged in this conflict presents one among the most singular questions in the military history of the world. With a name for conquest and terrible power which has made them a by-word of terror among the nations of Christendom, they are in the eyes of some simply synonymous with weakness and pusillanimity. Behind walls they perform prodigies of valour which are all contradicted in actions in the field, and in the siege the laurel is won which rapidly fades away in the open plain. Backed and led on by able generals they become the terror of their foes, while if left to themselves they are scared by

the advance of the first enemy and scatter alarm before them in a discreditable and precipitate retreat. The same contradiction marked their general history since they first marched westward from the Caspian. While the names of Othman, Amurath, and Mahomet, rank among the first conquerors in the world; and the mention of Scanderbeg or Constantinople must awaken memories which leave the Turk in the first rank of successful conquerors against vast and formidable odds; the associations which wind around the names of Tamerlane and Bajazet, and of many a Russian treaty, chequer the career of their military history with shade as dark as their intervening lights are brilliant. That they are destined by Providence to occupy some most important and prominent position in the development of the world's history there can be no doubt; though their destiny and that of their race and religion may still be wrapped in darkness and obscurity.

"What can the fellows have made the attack for?" said Leonard as he rode along by the side of the wounded cavalry officer.

"If they had got Balaklava they could not have held it half-an-hour," said his companion, "and if they held it as long as they pleased, it would matter little, with our fleet riding off Cape Cherson, and the French in position where they are."

Leonard shook his head. "Well," said he, "I should be sorry to see them in Balaklava. It often strikes me that we are now in a position which may easily be besieged, and the basis of operations for the besiegers. I have often been imagining the possibility of our

being shut up here and nothing but our ships to save us."

"Nonsense," said his companion, "why we shall be in Sebastopol in another fortnight, and then we command the Crimea."

"In another fortnight," said Leonard, "and its north side exposed to the pouring in of reinforcements and provisions, and Simpheropol in the hands of Menschikoff. No; no, I know but little of warfare, but common-sense makes that at least doubtful."

Whether Leonard's views were consistent with military rule or common sense, or whether the two were ever separable, time had to show our two friends. But time has shown Europe that military opinions and the common-sense expectations of men who know nothing of war may sometimes differ, and stand far apart from each other, as the several portions of a prismatic ray. But Leonard's attention was called off by a request that he would repair to the tent of the wounded officer, and he resorted to Allen's side in whom he felt the additional interest of being one of his own village and home.

Allen's wounds were bad, but they were glorious. His conduct had been noticed and commended by those in authority. We have already anticipated the state of his mind, and the condition of his wounds.

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. MULSO.

THEY say that Cardinal Mezzofanti knew thirty-seven languages, and that this was not the most remarkable part of his power, he was able also to assume the peculiar accent, gesture, and expression of the respective persons whose languages he spoke. Half a language is its *mode*. I doubt if he could master the words and mode of one language, that of love. To its disciples it surrounds itself with an external mannerism which is all its own, and assumes Protean shapes various as those who sit for their instruction in a school; one does not of necessity understand the other, and the same lesson conned by two will seem different when each stands up to say it. A word, a syllable, a tone, a look may thrill to ecstasy, or depress to the grave the votary of that mystic science.

There was about a mile and a half from Brandon a village we have mentioned already, Bushey, and a lane we spoke of, S. Mary's Hill. It was very beautiful. It had the high, overhanging hedgerow which free trade has swept away, because farmers now must cultivate that mysterious little strip which was all the world to us once, the long fringe by the edging of the ditch. In this lane the ditch had never been cleared, and the hedge never been cut, at least in Jessy's memory. She loved to gaze under the tangled briars, and wild roses, and towering woodbine, and tangling bindweed, and

hawthorn sprays; and gaze into chamber after chamber further and further still, the retreats where moths waited for the evening, and gnats shunned the thirsty sun. There were little dark pools of water peeping through the thorns and tall sickly bachelor's buttons which longed, but longed in vain, to feel the sun they saw.

There in that lane were wide irregular greenswards, coyly intruding on the yellow road, and then racing back as far as if they would imitate the irregular waves which wander so wantonly along the yellow sand. There too were ponds where dragon flies poised on rushes, and drowsy cows by sunset stood to cool themselves. There too were elms and ashes along the hedgerows guarding all like sentinels who watched the lane, checking the wind and chequering the sunshine. Jessy never remembered one being cut down. There too was a hill from which in far distance could be seen through the framework of the lane Oxhey wood and three counties—and at the bottom of the hill the lane seemed to plunge into a cool depth of mazy shadows and unexplored recesses. Jessy always loved the view *down* the lane, when at the bottom a sheep and its two lambs would move softly over the light and shade, and Cicely always liked the view in the distance, “so wide, so fresh, so beautiful: three counties, four church towers, and the square tower of what was once an abbey. My dear Jessy, it is delightful.”

At the bottom of that lane was a cottage of which we shall have to speak more hereafter. It stood in a garden surrounded by trees like a nest. Green trellised gates

opened into the lane through whose diagonal framework Sunday-school children peeped in the sunny June afternoon at the wondrous maze of china roses and the purple columbines which stood up so daintily from the flower-bed.

The cottage, for it was more like one than a house, was very large : built full of gables, thatched in the roof, and irregular in all directions ; while old carved wood-work struggled to be still seen through the triumphant honey-suckle which had after years succeeded in tossing its victorious colours over the highest peak of the gable.

But more of the place anon.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Mulso lived here. Mrs. Mulso was Mr. Seymour's sister. She had no child, and loved Jessy like her own.

" Here comes my pratty one," the kind old lady used to say as she would hold open the green trellised gate and look up the lane down which Jessy was running, a little girl with her nurse behind her : her long hair twined with wild honey-suckle, and forget-me-nots in her hand.

Jessy's highest delight used to be to take that walk, and in Mrs. Mulso's little room upstairs in gazing at shelves full of strange old china, screens of beautiful bird's feathers, brilliant enamels intense as one of Ross's miniatures, watches backed with blue as deep and intense as the sky in the July noon, Jessy would spend the livelong hour ; and sitting on the soft Persian carpet surrounded by her glowing spoils, would look like some Peri out of Lalla Rookh with her long streaming hair gazing at the lovely furniture of Paradise.

To Mrs. Mulso's Jessy went to-day. It was February, early February : and the first earliest tints of spring were getting into tune for summer-time. The laurels looked russet green against the lines of golden crocuses which fringed the borders, and the pale white snowdrop hung its head as if ashamed of the gaudy grandeur of its conceited brother. Robins hopped and puffed their crimson breasts as they approached the breakfast-room window to receive the accustomed boon of crumbs after breakfast from Mrs. Mulso's hand. Jessy had come down from the Rectory early. From her youngest days she had been in the habit of talking with her aunt freely, since her mother had long since been dead, and Mrs. Mulso's warm affection and fervid mode of viewing things, naturally fascinated a young and sensitive mind like Jessy's. The urn had not yet done puffing occasionally on the table, and empty egg-shells with the huge home-made loaf on a wooden platter, and the cold ham on the mahogany dumbwaiter, brought back to Jessy's mind the recollection of so many days of early childhood.

Jessy's entrance was the signal of universal joy. Mrs. Mulso kissed her with warm affection, and Mr. Mulso's " Well, my dear," was, as ever, unaffected and kind, as he rose to leave the room to the ladies. There was another lady there who always lived with the Mulsos, and who was nearly as much mixed up with the old thatched cottage as the Mulsos themselves. Mrs. Thorburn was a woman of about five and forty at this time, she had lived for twenty years with the Mulsos : she had been left early in life a widow in very poor circumstances,

and being a niece of the Mulso's, they had given her a home. Her early life had been very happy, and had lent a lustre to the long and more cloudy future. Her husband was a clergyman ; she had married in early youth, and their few days together had been spent in the deepest affection and unfeigned love to God. Long years had not wiped out from the sand of her living memory and affections the impressions of his tenderness ; his constant example and his efforts to bring her to God.

Her widowhood had been spent in the continued sense of God's presence, and in the eventual prospect of meeting soon him whose love had been so bright through his earthly journey.

Mrs. Mulso valued and loved Mrs. Thorburn, but she could not understand her, and fancied her religion excessive and melancholy. A slight shade of sadness and a naturally reserved manner, gave to many the impression that Mrs. Thorburn would be a severe censor or an exacting adviser : though those who knew her well ever told a different story. She worked in the village for Mr. Seymour, and was known and loved in many a cottage, and to many a village child, where the earliest associations of religion were mixed up with her advice, her influence, and her kindness.

Jessy had always rather feared her. The school of religion in which she had been brought up had been of that kind which marked that of Mr. Seymour's school, though high in its tone of morality and strict recognition of the laws which bound mankind together ; it erred on the side of kindness and lenience.

to all others but to self, and took for granted that every latent feeling was in unison with the outward acts of ordinary life. With the world this school would naturally be popular; but there were those whose deeper cravings yearned for another treatment: whose inward communings spoke of wider separation between the soul and God, than such kind critics were inclined to consider possible.

There were times when Jessy had a feeling that Mr. Seymour and Mrs. Mulso overrated her goodness and passed too lightly over deep hidden motive springs of evil, and that Mrs. Thorburn would more truly and more accurately read her malady, and remedy her disease.

"Dear aunt, I want to speak a few words with you alone," said Jessy, as she received the joy which her presence gave with that reciprocated pleasure which showed how used she was to find it at Mr. Mulso's.

"There's no trouble, is there?" said the old lady, in the tone of anxiety which she ever assumed the moment anything out of the most usual order of things occurred. "No one has been worrying my pretty Jessy. Now I will answer for it, your dear father has been asking you to visit some of his sick people and it is too much for you: I always tell him so and you are so good that you will do what he asks you always, or it's that Cicely Loraine—"

"It is none of them," said Jessy, with a smile which she never could refrain at the unsuppressed dislike which her aunt ever showed for Miss Loraine, who no more combined with Mrs. Mulso than the beams of sunrise can with sunset.

"None of these : do come with me."

That little room upstairs of Mrs. Mulso's ! oh had not Jessy known it well and long ! The bay window, the frail wooden balcony ever so thronged with roses and honeysuckles in June, the view of Bushey church seen through it on the hill over the thick shrubbery below, the two benches at either end of the balcony made of open bars, one great pleasure in sitting on which was the exquisite satisfaction of finding at the close of each minute that the whole fabric had not descended with you bodily. Then the paper on the wall, the large coloured flowers on the pale buff ground, the beautiful butterflies which spread their wings among them, the clear and manifest rose-buds and convolvuluses when generally on paper it is too doubtful what the flower is ; then that little cabinet with tiny brass trellis work and brown silk inside, the great box on the ormolu table inlaid with ivory ; the odd collection of books—Wordsworth, Cowper, Addison, Blair's Sermons and Pamela ; and the shells pale violet and pink, lying in swansdown in a large box under a glass lid. Jessy knew each object so well on that morning she sat down in the chair she always sat in, opposite to Mrs. Mulso. Jessy knew the smell of the room so well, such a mixture of lavender water, porphyry, and silk.

"Well, and what have they been doing to my pretty one ?" said Mrs. Mulso with that pathos in her tone which would lead you to think she was always acting Ophelia. "I wish you would not mind that horrid Miss Loraine, Cicely they call her, I can't bear the name : why shouldn't they call her Ann ? why

does my Jessy allow herself to be so commanded by her?"

"Indeed, aunt, I have nothing to complain of Cicely: I did not come to speak of her, far from it; she is very good and kind."

"Oh I have no power to understand all these fine young people, you know, my love. I believe they would excommunicate their mothers as soon as look at them."

Jessy could not help smiling again at the pertinacity with which Mrs. Mulso would assail poor Cicely, as she sat gazing and musing on her face looking so kind, and so neatly arranged in her dress as she ever was.

"Why, aunt, I shall be afraid of coming near you when dear Leonard comes home: you seem so to dislike the family."

"He's not worthy of you, my love, but I will bear him for your sake. Though he is one of your new fangled ones; and I daresay fills your head with every kind of nonsense about new poets and heroes one never heard of."

"No, dear aunt," said Jessy, despairing of getting her off her favourite theme. "No, Leonard loves your old school poets as you call them. I have heard him read Cowper till I have cried."

"No, have you?" said Mrs. Mulso, "then he's a noble boy, and I love him. Oh Jessy, there is nothing like Cowper. I wish you read him more. But I suppose it's a sin to say so now-a-days. If one does, one is put down for something unusually ignorant and foolish. I will forgive your new friends a good deal for

their love for Wordsworth. He lay on the shelf for thirty years. I used to love him so. He is always next Cowper."

"Peter Bell, aunt," said Jessy smiling.

But Mrs. Mulso had begun her quotations, for the good old lady's first delight was to summon the power of memory to scatter her hosts of supposed foes.

"Green leaves were there—

But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze :
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
Our thoughts at least are ours : and this wild rock,
My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."

Taking advantage of a moment's pause, Jessy broke in :—

"Dear aunt, I want you to help me. I want advice very, very much," said Jessy, turning pale as if she were making an effort to say what she did say. "I want some advice on a point, a point to do with—"

"If there is anything to do with religion, my child, surely there is no one better than your excellent father."

Jessy coloured and then turned pale. "Dear papa," said she, "yes, but I think I want just now something else. I want—or first I want you to ask Mrs. Thorburn if she will let me talk to her."

Jessy knew the plunge she was making. It was always uncertain footing when Mrs. Thorburn was in the case, for Mrs. Mulso was jealous of her influence and disliked her opinions; and Jessy knew that nothing could be more hazardous than begging an interview.

But it would have been worse to ~~have~~ attempted it without Mrs. Mulso's leave, and the instinctive awe which she had ever had of Mrs. Thorburn, which in childhood had amounted to dislike, made the need of some one else to break the ice the more needful.

"Mrs. Thorburn!" said Mrs. Mulso, in a surprised and offended tone. "My dear, Mrs. Thorburn's opinions are peculiar, and I am certain would cast a cloud over your young mind, which I would not for the world have. Oh no! if you have any kind of anxiety, do go to your dear and excellent father."

But Jessy was bent on seeing Mrs. Thorburn; her mind had been long at work, and she *must* relieve it and get advice, and she had an instinctive feeling that Mrs. Thorburn was the person who would understand her grief. She had read sympathy and experience in her face, and she felt won towards her by what she saw.

She took long in settling the question with Mrs. Mulso. But at length the day was won, and Mrs. Mulso consented to her niece's request, though with some annoyance. But Jessy knew how soon the cloud would pass away.

Jessy had long yearned for sympathy—a sympathy she neither knew where to find nor what it was for—a yearning after some fleeting form, which she could not limit by definite outlines of her own. She was like multitudes; one whose strong yearnings struggled for objects, but had never yet found the object which would satisfy them. There are those who know the anguish which I describe.

Those who find in the husband love, respect, regard, attention, all which others think we need, and yet in scarcely one moment of life have they found the one thing they yearned for, sympathy—the power to understand their feelings and wants; the power to appreciate their wishes, to bear with their infirmities, to explain their difficulties, and to understand that they may have needs which were never theirs. They know what I mean.

The child knows who, like Jessy, has had all that would make home happy, all that the world called sunshine, ay! the warmest, gayest, loveliest sunshine which ever shone. But that world, those friends, those dearest ones, who observed the sunbeams in which she seemed to bask, knew nought of the cold east wind which stole and continually blew across her, and chilled her warmest moment with its creeping touch.

Mr. Seymour loved her as the one form in which his soul's love was centred—his only child—his sole relic of his departed wife; and in Jessy he saw nothing but what was beautiful and good. She was full of love, modesty, intelligence, clinging affection, yearning to do right. What could she be more, and could she want more? Had he wished to draw an angel, most innocently and simply would he have drawn his child. She was his angel form which ever preceded him in his life's journey. He loved her, admired her, advised her.

Jessy often felt wretched; she was conscious of deeper faults than met her father's eye, and deeper desires than he ever noticed. But it was hopeless.

One Easter-eve, she had knelt quietly down by her father's knees, and placing his hand on her head, said :—

"Dear, dear papa, I do wish you would sometimes ask me something about myself. You do to your own parishioners, and you should not take it for granted that all is right with me."

"My precious child, don't talk so. If all my parish were as ready as you are for the Holy Communion to-morrow, they would be well off. God Almighty bless my child!"

So saying, the old man kissed her, and said, "And now, my Jessy, to bed; eight hours' good sleep, you know, for such as you, and seven for middle-aged, and six for old birds like me, who don't need so long a rest as we approach the journey's end."

And he sent her off to bed. There was no hope there.

Mrs. Mulso was worse still; she only admired, and adored, and called her, "My pratty one."

Cicely had no sympathy with any one; she was like a drop of cold water running over polished steel, no union, no intermingling. The man who married Cicely must have a clear view of life, a decided plan of action, no hesitations, no anxieties; then she would make an admirable wife, she would march onwards to the bivouack of life firmly and gloriously, but there must be no swervings.

Mr. Loraine admired Jessy, and thought her a most lady-like and excellent girl; and Mrs. Loraine always said, as she tried to extricate a tangle of crochet-work.

"Well, my dear, how are you to-day? always about some good work in the parish. I wish I could be as active as you are; but you are so good."

Then Leonard! He saw only in her the guiding influence, the sweet, soft, shining of his evening star, which ever rose at the close of each day of work or toil, weal or woe, to shed the soothing lustre of its ray as she arose on the advancing night for him, and him alone. As to finding a fault, or seeing one, a man might as well attempt to examine the disc of the moon with a midnight lamp, as Leonard see in Jessy aught to blame, or aught to mend.

So Jessy sighed from one to the other—beaten backwards and forwards like the feathered shuttlecock of human admiration, longing to fall down somewhere and find rest.

"How many who do not half as much deserve to do so," sighed Jessy, "have fallen long since. Oh, how I wish they would take the truer view."

Unfortunately for her, her father was one of that school and day, which would peculiarly appreciate what appeared in Jessy's life and conduct, and did not look below the surface.

But she was not happy. God does sometimes call very loudly to us from within the heart's chamber, and we shut up alone with the voice hear it, others do not, and therefore do not believe it nor understand it. We, like Samuel in the vision at night, hear God speak, and we know and tremble at His Voice; we listen again, and hear again, and say with yearning reverence, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." But when we go

to the Elis of our own life, they have not heard the voice, nor understood the communication. Still *it is* God, and *it is* God speaking to *us*.

"Well, I suppose I am never to be known," said Jessy, as she had been running her fingers over the chords of the piano, on one of those days when Leonard had been more than usually affectionate, and Mr. Seymour had been peculiarly dependant on his "precious child." "Oh, how I wish they knew me; how I wish Leonard would understand me; I wish he would not admire so much; I wish he would *only love*."

And turning again to her music, she sang with her own sweet voice the song which spoke her soul's feelings then :—

" Oh! ask not, hope thou not too much
Of sympathy below;
Few are the hearts whence one same touch
Bids the sweet fountain flow.

" Few—and by still conflicting powers
Forbidden here to meet,
Such ties would make this life of ours
Too fair for aught so fleet.

" It may be that thy brother's eye
Sees not as thine which turns
In such deep reverence to the sky
Where the rich sunset burns.

" It may be that the breath of spring,
Born amidst violets lone,
A rapture o'er the soul can bring,
A dream to thee unknown.

"The tune that speaks of other times,
A sorrowful delight;
The melody of distant chimes,
The sound of waves by night.

"The wind that with so many a tone
Some chord within can thrill;
These may have language all thine own,
To *him* a mystery still."

But we must go back—where were we?

There was one person to whom Jessy turned with deep yearning, Mrs. Thorburn; there was no Clergyman she could reach; she was thrown in the way of none, and her shrinking nature forbade her seeking, as some find no difficulty in doing, one who could sympathize with her.

Mr. Bathurst was cold, repulsive, dogmatic, and dry, just the man who could successfully guide Cicely, but never could attract Jessy.

But to reach Mrs. Thorburn was like the effort to reach Sebastopol—seen from every hill, there was no getting further—and visit after visit the sight of Mrs. Thorburn's quiet, subdued countenance and placid face only made Jessy long to know her better; and the longer the desired object was held from her, the more she longed, and the more she felt it was the one essential thing to life.

But she had succeeded, and she was to see her by herself. She had hitherto been held back by the dread of offending Mrs. Mulso, or causing distress to her father; and the constant jealousy with which

Mrs. Mulso viewed her niece had ever thrown around the latter a cordon of impervious walls.

Mrs. Thorburn had a room to herself. It had a step across the middle going down into a shady bay window, made darker by the immense boughs of an overshadowing elm. The upper part of the room was dark, and the wall was hung with pictures. It was a peculiar room, and one which belonged essentially to Mr. Mulso's thatched cottage.

Here Mrs. Thorburn spent the long days of summer, reading, working, teaching little village children, remembering him whose voice once guided her to God, and whose spirit caught up into the as yet unknown intercourse with his SAVIOUR awaited her conquest over self and Satan, and her union for ever with him and God. The hope bore her on : carried her through much. She was not one who talked much, nor was her temper morose or easily vexed. She really wished to get on well with others, and for others to get on well with her. She loved the country and the large bending trees which ever shaded her windows, the rooks which cawed like nature's continual clockwork through the day, and the bleating of early lambs which sounded in mellowed cries from the fields over the hedgerow. Then on each day two or three little children from the village came to see her to learn to read or do small work for her. Her little means were spent on those in trouble. She was looking to get to heaven ; that was her aim ; and each sixpence, each penny, like the widow's mite, seemed a new opportunity of winning the love of JESUS, a new channel on the heaven-ward road

which paved the way to God. She longed to find means of reaching Him, and anything which would help her to that blessed end she valued and thanked God for.

Mrs. Mulso could not understand her : she knew she was very good ; “ But righteous over much, new fangled and sectarian, odd and a little mad perhaps. My dear, take care, my pretty Jessy,” said the old lady taking her short steps across the wide shady landing place, in her purple silk gown, and dressed as she always was, so neatly and so like an old lady. “ My dear, take care ; Mrs. Thorburn is peculiar—very.”

“ But, dear aunt, she is—”

“ Oh yes, my dear, very good ; far better than we old fashioned folks ;” and Mrs. Mulso was offended and went quickly to her own room. But before she had closed the door, she said, “ I’m afraid I am not going to teach ten little girls with green ribbons on their bonnets curtsying and bobbing to me whenever I go through the parish. You must not trust me too much, my love. Follow the new lights.” These kind of speeches showed no very tender mind towards Mrs. Thorburn. But the good old lady did value and love her, and was always sorry when she had been betrayed into any expressions of unkindness. But she could not help herself.

Jessy was rather perplexed and hurt, she had a deep unfathomed feeling about Mrs. Thorburn, and she felt sure that she was the philosopher who had found her stone, and could solve her doubts. But how to get at her through the thick atmosphere of her own shyness

and Mrs. Mulso's incessant jealousies had been the puzzle. Jessy lived in too much respect and deference, if such a thing can be, of her father and her aunt's good feeling, and dreaded beyond measure any check to the even flow of their approbation. Yes, Jessy, there was a little, a very little vanity, or what? something which made you unwilling to forfeit the pleasure of so many kind flattering words. Ah well! we are not sitting as critics on Jessy's moral conduct, but as the simple annalists of her weal and woe.

And now she had reached the object of her wish, and was to have a long talk with Mrs. Thorburn, about herself, what was she to say? how begin? Jessy's was anything but an even character. Her flight was not like that of those birds which sail so calmly and smoothly through the air, that you feel at last scarcely inclined to draw breath as you gaze on their onward flight, as if they were sailing into some calm harbour, far away amid the cloudy islands which belt the ocean of heavenly blue. She gave no such impression, as you, reader, have by this time found out no doubt; and as poor Leonard, if he ever married her, and remember, I do not say whether he did or no, would have had to find out. He would have had to laugh merrily ten times a day, as he placed his arm round her waist and drew her towards him, and kissed her loving forehead, looking so anxious because "Leonard was really going out for two hours to ride, and would not return this evening till ten."

Her flight was restless; like some picture we have seen where a little flitting bird, whose flight had been on

slanting sunbeams, and through lower currents tremblingly and lovingly though a little coyly, inviting our attention and wooing our love, has at last been struck in its loving breast by some shot, and it flutters and struggles, and chirps through its last death-agony, down by the roots of the high grass over whose bending tops it used so happily to skim. Poor little sorrower! die quietly, we will not disturb you. What, have you trusted man too well, and wooed over confidently his attention. Ah! never mind, it is over now, your brief experience and your brief disappointments. Too late for you, yet we may learn a lesson still. The very hand on whose soothing touch and caress we have existed may lay *us* low, and leave us unnoticed to flutter and to die. You leave a less even impression of your life's flight behind you, well and good. But perhaps for all that, we feel the more interest in you, as some of us do in Jessy, who was now sitting with Mrs. Thorburn.

Jessy was looking out of the window, Mrs. Thorburn was working, they had been talking half an hour, and we break into the middle, as Mrs. Thorburn was saying:—

“That is what I mean by background, some wide stretching scene which lies behind all the acts and figures of life, and will be there when the drama is played out, still there. “The LORD is my portion.” “The LORD is my Shepherd, and therefore shall I lack nothing.” “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD taketh me up.”

“A wide stretching background still there, when the drama is played out, I like that so,” said Jessy,

musingly, as she gazed out of the window, played out,—“and—do say the end of that idea again.”

Mrs. Thorburn smiled. “You will think me very allegorical, Miss Seymour, but I get at the way of realising truths through allegories, and then I find myself giving them to others. I spoke of the ‘figures’ with the acts, did I not?”

“Oh, yes,” said Jessy, “that was it, the figures as well as the acts: my life has more to do with ‘figures’ than ‘acts.’ I was thinking of Leonard,” said she to herself, “the figure.”

“What I mean,” said Mrs. Thorburn, “is that the trouble you seem suffering from is the conviction that all objects of earth are frail and passing away; that you may soon be left without those to which you have most clung, that you may soon find the very rock on which you have anchored all your love and hopes, that the very harbour into which you think you are sailing, to find quiet water, is failing you, and you want something beyond, something which will not fail you, something which lasts when all the rest disappoints and——”

“Oh, stop, stop,” said Jessy, covering her face with her hand, “do stop; hear what I do feel exactly. You have so nearly described what I feel. But I must speak out. Yes—yes—just that, just that, I have always been loving something; clinging to something; trying to keep it, *to keep it*, to make it *my own*, to call it *my own*. I used to do so when I was a little child, years, years ago. Before I loved him I used to love a little nest in the shrubbery, and go and look at it and love it day after day, and feel it was like home,

which nobody knew except I and the birds. Oh, I used to love it so! I remember it so well now, when I used to run away from all the rest and steal in and look at them, and the bird used to sing to me on the spray so sweetly. I loved the birds, and thought that they loved me, and one day I went and the nest was all broken and scattered; some boys had taken it, and one of the birds lay on the ground and its feathers all around, it was not quite dead. It wouldn't leave its young ones, and the boys had hurt it, broken its wings, and there it lay fluttering, and I took it up and laid it in my bosom, and it looked as if it loved me, and then it died, died presently, poor little thing, it struggled so and nestled down against me. Oh, I felt so dull, so desolate without my nest to go to. I felt I cared for nothing for ages after. That had been like my life—like all my life. Then I loved a little girl who went to the school where I went to for a year, a little quiet, fair girl, so gentle, and she loved me and I loved her, and she had no mother, and used to talk of going to heaven; and we talked together, and sung hymns together in the summer evenings so happily. She caught the scarlet fever, and died, and I mightn't see her. I only saw her buried, and then I cared for *nothing*—wanted *background*, background, yes, that's the word. Background—"figures gone," and "nothing behind," dark, empty, cold, dull. Then—I loved—I mean Leonard Loreine loved me, and oh, did I not love him so, so much! Then I knew what it was to love something more than ever; O he used to love me so much. When

he called me 'his Jessy,' his own life and delight, and how I should be all to him, yes—all to him, O it did seem so beautiful, so happy, I longed to be *all* to somebody, to something. It isn't jealousy, is it? I longed for it, and I loved him! I love him for ever and ever; and now I think I fancy—O I don't know, it's so wicked, but I imagine—suppose Leonard too should—should—be killed in the war, if he should—O Mrs. Thorburn, what *should* I do?"

There was a pause, neither spoke. Jessy's touching, simple tale of life had riveted Mrs. Thorburn's attention, she had laid her work quietly down, and folding her hands together, was gazing out on the great elm tree which soughed and sighed in the quiet wind.

"What shall I do?" said Jessy, not taking her hands from her eyes, "the figure, the one dear, dear figure, *the* figure, my *own* figure gone and ——"

"And no background," said Mrs. Thorburn, quietly.

"Yes, yes, there, there is the point, No background, nothing left, nothing to last, nothing to endure, nothing to love *for ever*."

"All flesh is grass, and all the glory of men as the flowers of the grass, the grass withereth, but the word of the LORD *abideth for ever*."

"Oh, say those words again!"

"The word of the LORD *abideth for ever*," said Mrs. Thorburn. "'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.' 'Thou shalt keep him in per-

fect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.' 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' "

"Oh, how beautiful," said Jessy, "and yet I knew them all before. O, Mrs. Thorburn, but how, how can I make all those mine? how can I make that a background? how can I love God, and find in Him all that I find in ——" she paused.

"In Leonard, you would say," said Mrs. Thorburn, "I said so once, dear Miss Seymour; I thought it once, but God removed my figure, and brought the background out."

"Removed the figure," said Jessy, "Oh do not, do not talk so."

"Please God, He will not need to do so to you, but He did with me, moved my only figure quite away. The scene looked very, very dark to me, for awhile very; but by degrees the scene came out behind, and One took up the empty place who never fails. It was long before I could be satisfied, far longer before I could be happy. But I am *quite* happy now, quite."

"Quite?" said Jessy.

"Yes—I have found out the truth of the promise, 'I will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Me.' "

"Passing all understanding," said Jessy.

"Yes," said Mrs. Thorburn, "quite."

"Then tell me, tell me," said Jessy, fixing her earnest eyes on Mrs. Thorburn, "how can I stand so free, so happy, so at rest for ever; dear papa, my dear aunt

all tell me I am perfect, but—oh what folly, they don't know, they know nothing of how desolate, how wicked I feel, sometimes how idolatrous, how little religion is really my one object and aim, how little I really love God. Tell me what to do; I sit and think, and think how dreadful it would be if He were to take him away because I love him too much; what should I do? it would be all my fault. Oh tell me what to do."

"Dear Miss Seymour, you propose a large subject. First, I should say clearly understand what 'loving God' means, it does not mean being conscious of that kind of emotion of *love* which you are conscious of, towards those who are round you, it does not mean that. No one except the more perfect, realise that: perfect love in this world is a result of *habit*. But if you can say you long to love God, that you would try and bear all that He lays on you if it may lead you to love Him; if you love things and people who are holy and good, if you are determined to shun things which are in their own nature evil, if you can say, I will bear any loss before losing holiness and truth, then you love God."

"Oh thank you—yes—yes—go on—no—stop one moment, let me ask myself these questions, yes, they are so like me. I am always saying I do not *love* God as I love this and that thing in this world, and then I despair. Then what you say means that I need not despair, if I do not quite realise all that. Is that it?"
Need I give all up, because I feel so little able to realise my love to God?

"Well," continued Mrs. Thorburn, "I should urge you to take God's checks patiently and thankfully. If He tries to withdraw some parts of the figures of life, do not cling to them : if He tries to leave Himself the one great background, let Him. Let Him do what He will with you. He loves you, and will do nothing violently, nothing you cannot bear. With every temptation He will 'make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.'"

"Go on," said Jessy, whose face still was covered by her hands, eager to drink in each remark which Mrs. Thorburn made, "you are telling me just what I wanted."

"Then, my dear Miss Seymour, determine to see God's hand in every thing ; determine to read His handwriting on the wall of your life chamber, wherever you move ; and trust, entirely trust to His being willing to enable you to bear patiently your trial, and that He will never give you more than you are able to bear ; and all will be well. 'He will feed His flock like a Shepherd, and will carry the lambs in His arms.' 'He will temper the wind to the shorn lamb, and will ever stay His rough wind in the day of the east wind.' If He tries you it is to make heaven more dear to you and earth less."

"But ah ! there is the point," said Jessy ; "I cannot make heaven dear to me ; it is not dear to me ; I dread it ; it is strange and awful to me ; I had rather stay here, rather be with Leonard, rather not die."

"So I felt once," said Mrs. Thorburn, "and know your feeling well. But God will make heaven dear to

you if you will let Him. You cannot make yourself love it: it is no matter of our own effort; it is the result of acts which form a habit. You will love heaven and long for it more in proportion as more and more of those you love go thither, or as the cords of your earthly tabernacle are cut away. The tent which is stretched out on the soil of the wilderness appears firm and stable, and appears to need no wind to swell it out: but when the cords are cut its folds hang loose and windless, and need God's air to stretch them. If He cuts your tent-ropes for you, He will prepare a wind of His own to swell out the canvass: trust Him for that. Lie more passively in His hand, more quietly; that is what He wants; and let Him do to you what seemeth Him good."

There was a pause. "O thank you, dear Mrs. Thorburn, thank you ten thousand times. There was one thing more which I had to say, one little thing, I don't know how to say it."

"Say it, Miss Seymour, if you will; I am only too thankful to aid you."

"O it was this: I know it is only my own fault: but Leonard does not talk as you do. He does not understand my difficulties; he does not seem to sympathise with my feelings. He smiles when I tell him all this, and says I am all right and am so much better than he is; and he does not know half—oh not half;—if he did he never would say all he does. What shall I do? what should I do? And yet he is so very good."

"Don't think of that, Miss Seymour. Pray that

GOD will guide him and you. Pray that you may both 'have a right judgment in all things.' He will guide you both. Let him see by your example the influence of religion, and he will understand your wants better. Do not fret because he cannot understand you : no one thoroughly understands us but JESUS. 'He knoweth our frame,' and understands the whole case. MR. LORAINÉ loves GOD and is walking towards heaven, and GOD will guide into perfect truth all those who have set out in its blessed paths. Rely on that. The way of truth is sure to bring those who walk in it to its own lamp. Its stream will certainly lead up to its fountain. You are both in GOD's hand, so leave Him to do His own work. We are inclined to think far too much about our own personalities."

"What do you mean by that?" said Jessy.

"I mean," said Mrs. Thorburn, "that we make a great mistake in dwelling so much on our own personal condition. The great body of His Church and the personal glory of JESUS should be more our aim, and then we shall fall into our own place. EZRA's joy should be ours, to count it our highest privilege to be allowed after our wanderings to be a nail in His holy place."

"How do you mean? I do not understand you."

"I mean that we should have the general coherence and glory of His kingdom in our eye; we should aim at being nails keeping together the whole: doing often rough work, perhaps, and rude to look at. Be thankful to be a 'nail in His holy place.' You, dear Miss Seymour, are dwelling too much on the personal

points of the character, and are fretting and making yourself wretched, because you are thinking more of the members than the Body. The nail keeps all together, and by the coherence of the whole is itself kept."

"I like that thought, much, very much. But tell me how exactly do you mean. How can I be a nail in His holy place?"

"We keep God's house together many ways: when we bring together those who dispute; when we show a consistent life; when we forgive those who have deeply injured us; when we consent to the shame of penitence and confession, and take patiently God's dealing for our sins; then we are nails in God's house, nails in His holy place. You may depend on it, dear Miss Seymour, that your troubles many of them arise from your too great individuality. You allow yourself to think too much of yourself, instead of letting care and anxiety sink down in the one great feeling that God should do what He likes with you, and that He is carving and chiselling the stone for its own position in His holy place."

"Jessy, my love," said the voice of Mrs. Mulso, "I am sure you have been long enough with Alice. Come down to luncheon; it is not good for you to be so long talking; you know it is not, and here are your father and Miss Loraine both coming down the lane to find you."

The tone of Mrs. Mulso's voice told plainly enough, that her usual jealousy of Mrs. Thorburn's influence was at that moment prominent and uppermost, and

that her dread of her influencing Jessy's mind with any of her peculiar views was agitating the old lady.

Jessy pressed Mrs. Thorburn's hand, and looked through that full eye of her's the deep gratitude of her soul. She felt at that moment that anything was insipid and empty to her except the one yearning to seek God, and to find comfort to her spirit. But she could not wait, and she hastily left the room to follow Mrs. Mulso to the luncheon room, and to new scenes, people, and conversations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LUNCHEON.

THE luncheon was laid in a long passage which led from the dining-room into the drawing-room. It was furnished with Persian carpet, long couches, and hung with pictures; while large portfolios giving out an odorous smell of Russia leather and dust leant against the wall. Here and there in retiring niches were high blue and white China vases, which sent up scents when you approached them, seeming to come from sweet things of years ago which had been left and forgotten, down low in the shady depth; and in vain had gone on sending up their antiquated odours to claim notice and release. But they called in vain, none ever heeded, save sometimes a straggling idler who, on some long autumn holiday peering behind

each imaginative corner gazed down into the hollow vase, and, charmed with the quaint smell, lingered, and then started off, frightened at the coming tread of Burton, Mr. Mulso's butler, lest he should come and find him out of bounds. There were times when the poor forsaken things got a longer hearing when on a certain October evening all Mr. Mulso's grandchildren played at "hide and seek" over the house, and Jessy and Leonard used to hide together close to the China vase. Then the vase was noticed. And when through a long half hour of that shadowy autumn evening, Jessy and Leonard crouched down hiding, while the cries, now loud, now low, came surging through the house, Jessy would peer into the great blue and white vase, and plunge her hand into its cobweb-covered depth, and cry out, "Oh, Leonard, what is here?" Then out would come the poor forsaken things which had been so long striving for notice, all in vain. A little ball of crushed drawing-paper, a tennis-ball, and a piece of chalk. The chalk and the paper had been companions long before the tennis-ball came amongst them,—that came one day on a sudden, dropt in by the housemaid's hand to hide it from Master Leonard, who had broken two windows with it,—and from that time the three had joined in efforts to attract notice.

Yes, so we all do. To be noticed is a great solace in life's sorrows, and can cheer the saddest hour; half our sorrow is melted away by pity; and a word of kind compassion will drown the cries of a breaking heart: while to sorrow all alone without pity is

oh, how desolate. But the tennis-ball and the paper had their fill of it now, as they lay under little Jessy's wondering eye.

"What's here?" cried Leonard, as he pulled aside a great high portfolio, tied with dusty green tape, and found a crayon portrait leaning against the wall, "What is this? I wonder." Few things are alone, and the vase with its scented wonders had long known of the vicinity of the crayon drawing. It was their jubilee to-night.

"Hie spy hie; Leonard and Jessy," shrieked a young voice of one whose face had peered in through the great screen, and away went the drawing against the wall, and the tennis-ball back into the vase, and there they are now for aught I know; and away flew Jessy with her flowing hair, and her full and laughing eye, and Leonard after her as if they were born for each other. In that long room Jessy was going to luncheon to-day.

Mr. Seymour had come, and Cicely, and the governess, and Grace, and Mrs. Thorburn came down, and the party looked very happy. Mrs. Mulso came in a little late, and bustled up to her seat, patting Jessy on the shoulder as she passed her, and saying in a low tone as if to herself, "I hope they have looked well after you," and the old lady was in her seat.

Jessy was absorbed in her own thoughts, and that deep real talk she had had with Mrs. Thorburn. Oh how she wished it had been for hours and hours; but she would come again to-morrow. She dreaded the turn the conversation might take; she scarcely knew

why it should, but she felt it would dispel her bright dreams, the happy imagery of her mind.

Cicely, if she had it, sometimes would not use tact. Jessy, curious to say, had a good deal without knowing it; she was always playing her little lines of tact. There were certain subjects which she would not for the world have talked of on this occasion.

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Seymour, addressing Mrs. Mulso, in his kind cheerful voice, "and what has my runaway been doing down here all the morning—she has been playing truant ever since breakfast."

"Oh, we have been very good friends, very," said Mrs. Mulso.

So far good, that was a safe remark.

"The afternoon is very mild and spring-like," said Mrs. Thorburn, as she cut the loaf: that was safe.

"Very," said the governess from the wall, "but the poor must feel these long winters;" she always came in like the Adonic to a stanza, or those little particularizing and modifying particles in Greek, ever drawing up, limiting, and checking the last speaker. That remark was safe enough.

"Our good Mrs. Thorburn has been at work to relieve the long winter anyhow," cried Mr. Seymour. Safe.

Cicely cleared her throat, and fixed her dark eyes full on Mr. Seymour, and having slightly frowned said, "I have just heard from Mrs. Allen; I am happy to say the accounts are very good of that glorious Miss Nightingale."

Now for it, that was a deadly blow, the stone will be sure to hit now.

"I hope, my dear, you have got a portrait of Miss Nightingale in your room. She seems the object of all worship now-a-days," said Mrs. Mulso. She could not brook Cicely; but Miss Nightingale was worse.

"I am glad of it," said Mrs. Thorburn, "every Englishwoman must be proud of her."

Jessy grew hot and cold. The governess sighed and frowned. "There is danger in making too much of any people." She was silent; she had put in her particle, and it was no expletive.

"Well, for my part," said Mrs. Mulso, "I cannot imagine what you mean; why on earth cannot you be satisfied with Sophy and Susan, downright nurses, to go out to the work. I will answer for it, there are twenty such, just as good as Miss Nightingale, for the work, and far more fit—I cannot *bear* it."

Now the storm was up; Jessy turned a pleading glance on Cicely, as if to deprecate her pertinacity. But Lear might as well talk to the thunder as Jessy affect Cicely. Cicely had not moved except that she had fixed her eyes now on the bread instead of Mrs. Mulso. She looked as calm and deliberate as the Duke of Wellington biding his time for the last charge at Waterloo.

"Well, I do not believe there is any other English woman who stands in such a position—such self-devotion, such quiet determined self-sacrifice in the cause of her country. She seems to me just to occupy the middle position between the old-fashioned nurses, and the half-Romanist imitators of a system unnatural to

their age and country, and the present condition of the church of which they are members."

This was so calmly delivered that all the table showed emotion. The frown on the governess's face became more severe and contracted. Mr. Seymour laughed and said, "Well, Miss Loraine is determined to have a clear opinion." Grace looked up alarmed at Jessy, and Mrs. Thorburn clearing her throat said, "It is indeed a noble example."

Poor Mrs. Mulso turned to Jessy with a look which oscillated between a tear and a laugh.

"Our dowdy Sophys and Sallys are quite gone by. Your ladies in silk and satin are all the thing now: Adelindas and Cecillas. Jessy, my love, will you come with me this afternoon to see *poor* old Dobbins; she and I and you will just do for each other."

This speech was full of significance, and consistent in tone and expression. It was spoken like a prima donna; but Mrs. Mulso always spoke so.

Poor Jessy was sorely troubled; she certainly did not want to declare herself of the Sophy, Susan, and Mrs. Mulso faction; or march under the colours of the brown and green stuff, and blue and white chintz. Still she felt unwilling to desert her kind old aunt in an extremity, and was a little vexed with Cicely at her determined pertinacity. She did not answer immediately, but fixed her eye on Mrs. Thorburn, to see the line which she would take in the crisis. But Jessy's alliance was far too important for Mrs. Mulso to suffer an instant's neutrality. "Jessy, my love, will you be ready at two, it's an old fashioned hour, but for all

that perhaps none the worse. I suppose now-a-days simple morality is as out of date as a short sleeve, or a peruke on a young lady in one of Downman's portraits. But to my mind, early hours go with good old-fashioned morality."

Still Jessy was undecided what to do: the storm was clearly brewing hotter and hotter. But whatever Jessy's despair might be, it all gave way before astonishment and admiration at Cicely's determination, who without heeding Mrs. Mulso's Shakspearian addresses and soliloquies, quietly drew out Mrs. Allen's letter, and asked Mr. Seymour if he would like to hear some of it. The old gentleman partly between a kind of latent fun in him which made him enjoy the scene which was going on, and partly from what some thought an ignorance of character, and the workings of human motives (and really the good clergyman was rather a puzzle) immediately assented. "Thank you, Miss Loraine, if you are good enough, I am sure we shall all be delighted and much obliged besides."

The governess frowned more and more, and said something in a low tone about "Puseyism," and "Mrs. Fry," and "nurses," and "Sisters of Charity," and "good Mrs. Gurney," and "opinions of Matthew Henry." But the statements were so fitful, and broken, and faint, that no one attended to her, and they passed off on the ears of all present, as nothing more than hypochondriacal sobs, which the governess was known to be subject to, or those suppressed anathemas which Grace and Alice were so in the habit of hearing their excellent governess give vent to.

"I cannot, dear Miss Loraine, do justice sufficiently to Miss Nightingale, her high principles, her calm decided firmness of purpose, her practical religion, mixed as it is with such excellent worldly wisdom, they make her the admiration of everybody. She has set a seal to the present war. It will be marked above all late ones, if for nothing else for having produced Miss Nightingale."

Mrs. Mulso had gone on up to this point, smelling her lavender water, for she never used Eau de Cologne, and looking over the silver-hinged stopper at Jessy. Jessy could not make out whether she was laughing or crying at her.

"The late war, I should think, indeed the Duke of Cumberland had never consented to a troop of Sisters of Charity in his march into Scotland. The late war, why even the good Duke of Wellington would have scouted such intruders from his camp. Ah, well, Jessy, these new-fangled views have put us out of date altogether. Nurses are become moral teachers, and poets become parsons. But I doubt if they will stand the test of any close inspection of their own lives; they must take care. What is it Siddons used to say?—

"'Do not as some ungracious pastors do
Show *me* the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whilst like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.'"

So saying, the old lady rose, and throwing her white shawl over her head with a quick step left the room;

as she closed the door, she turned to Jessy saying, "Jessy, my precious one, come with me, don't live in chains. Come with me, and leave them all, and I will call you a noble girl."

So saying, Mrs. Mulso disappeared, closing the door behind her. Jessy had summoned resolution enough to adhere to the movement party, and to give in her adhesion to Cicely.

Cicely bore the whole scene with amazing calmness.

"What kind of person is Miss Nightingale?" said Mrs. Thorburn. "I have so very imperfect an idea of her; some people say, she is so severe, and others, that she is refined and kind. It is hard to ascertain the truth."

"I believe from all I have heard, that she is most kind and refined, although much is said on the other side about her being the contrary. I have here a letter which I will read an extract from, which will a little show what she is. A medical officer writes to a friend of mine in this town. 'Who do you think appeared at my quarters the other day? I was walking with Morris, when I was told that a lady wished to speak with me; on going, I found a company consisting of a lady and three gentlemen, who asked to see my hospital. On seeing the card, I saw Miss Nightingale's name. I of course begged them to inspect the hospital. I had long wished to see Miss Nightingale. She was refined, very agreeable, and talked intelligently; she seemed in every way admirably suited to her work; the prejudices conceived about her before she came out, wonderfully pass away on seeing her; she is very

wide-minded, and willing to converse freely.' I can quite trust this account of her," said Cicely.

"It is very singular that so much false impression should have gone out about her."

"She is a Puseyite," said the governess,—“reason enough,”—and then there was something about “a righteous nation,” and “Rome,” and “Sister of Charity.” But the governess never speaks out or distinctly or consecutively; whether from a want of clearness in her own perceptions, or want of decision in her opinions, was left to the opinions of her friends.

“Pardon me,” said Cicely. “If I understand what you mean by the term, Miss Nightingale seems to profess and act on, the principles of most Christian people among us. The outcry against her is as untrue as it is ungenerous; whoever had gone out would have been assailed with the same outcry.”

“That is very true,” said Mrs. Thorburn. “I fear the real cause and source of the outcry lies in the lack of earnestness and religious creativeness in the nation.”

“Very good,” said Mr. Seymour, “very good; I am very much afraid that now-a-days many people are inclined to think all that spirit which you, Alice, have called so appropriately religious creativeness, merely radicalism and love of change for its own sake, whereas it seems really to spring where it does exist from that desire to apply religion to the objects and circumstances of passing life which is the natural yearning of every earnest mind. It is not indeed, strictly creativeness, but the desire continually to apply an original creation to the rising wants and exigencies of the day.”

Mr. Seymour was wide-minded, and well read, and though he belonged especially to one school of theology, he did not therefore by any means condemn others, or refuse to appreciate the width or depth of their basis.

"Yes," said Mrs. Thorburn, "that is what I meant. Methodism was once the term of reproach, for the earnestness of a day past, as Puseyism is for that of these times."

"Well, for my part," said Mr. Seymour, "I think this good Miss Nightingale seems a very excellent person, and in all respects deserving our great regard. I confess I should be a little frightened at her. But, my Jessy, when we have her to pay a visit at the Parsonage, I think we will have Alice Thorburn to come and do the honours. She is, I suppose, a sort of Mrs. Fry, who I remember made a great stir some years ago, and became one of the most prominent of ladies for good works."

"Mrs. Fry was an Evangelical—strictly pious," said the governess.

"Well, Evangelical or no, I suppose piety does consist in good works anyhow," said the Clergyman, "and we really cannot quarrel with this good lady's particular shade of views, if she do such good self-denying acts as these."

"Not much self-denial," said the governess, gaining courage; "she has praise enough for it. Everybody is singing her praise."

"Well, I suppose our friend Mrs. Fry had a good deal of that kind of annoyance," said Mr. Seymour, smiling at Cicely.

"Yes," said the governess, "but she cared nothing for it."

"And Miss Nightingale lives for it?" said the Clergyman.

"They say she is High Church," said the governess.

"Well," said Mr. Seymour, "if that is the whole charge we have against Miss Nightingale, I confess to thinking that she has a very good case in this house, for we cannot make much against her."

Mr. Seymour rose to go and proposed to Jessy to go home with him. Jessy would fain have had a longer talk with Mrs. Thorburn, but she determined to wait till the next day, as Mr. Seymour's wish was ever law to her.

"My Jessy," said he, "bring home those snowdrops which your aunt gathered for us; they are of a beautiful kind, I wish we had some like them."

"You can have all ours, I am sure," said Cicely, "as far as I am concerned I have no care for them."

"Oh, I like them so much," said Jessy, taking up the bunch of snowdrops, "only I do not care for anything as I do for wild flowers. I so long for summer to be able to go and gather plenty of them."

"Well, I confess I do not quite feel that," said her father, "I prefer my geraniums and roses with their scent and colour to your whole tribes of wild flowers; and I may be bold enough to yield to an old-fashioned preference to gathering a flower in comfort off my lawn, to struggling through a hedge, and tearing myself with brambles to catch hold of a woodbine, and then in the agony to save myself, to find all the leaves

ripped off the stem and the flowers too, and cut my fingers with the stalk into the bargain."

"Oh, papa, that is just one reason why I like them so much; I like the adventure of getting them more than the getting them themselves."

"Now, do not you agree with me, Miss Loraine? do you prefer these agonising struggles of Jessy's after her flowers, to getting them quietly and in peace?"

"I don't think I am particularly fond of flowers at all," said Cicely, "I am always urging papa to have the garden more full of shrubs, and the cedar tribe of dwarf trees."

"Now, Mrs. Thorburn," cried Jessy, "do agree with me; I know you do. Do you not like wild flowers?"

"Well, I confess," said Mrs. Thorburn, "I think it is a mistake to prefer wild flowers to cultivated flowers. Flowers do not reach their perfection in their wild state either in colour, odour, or form. It seems based on the very mistake that things in a state of nature are in a higher state than in one of cultivation. If God has made the perfection of the flower to consist in its cultivation, I cannot fancy that we are correct in admiring the wild one most."

Poor Jessy found few champions. She took refuge in the feeling that if Leonard were there he would have agreed with her. I doubt it; and so perhaps does my reader. But she hung her view on a scene which had occurred last summer: she had come in from a long walk with Leonard on a hot summer's evening, and he had been delighting himself with covering her with flowers,

eglantines in her hair and wild ivy in streamers round her neck. She came in, leaning on Leonard's arm, through the drawing room window, which opened down to the lawn. The tea was on the table, the urn hissing, and certain red and white cups and saucers with gilt edges, which some of my readers remember so well, were arranged on the tray.

She did look very lovely, and so all thought. Leonard stood gazing at her, and felt that she had never looked more beautiful, as she threw herself into a low cane chair, tired with her walk, and looking up at him with her full blue eye overflowing with love.

"Oh how I hate all these forms and usages of society: dear Grace, do wind that eglantine more round my head, it is falling off. Oh Leonard, I hope you won't expect me to live in society hereafter: a deep wood, and a little cottage all over roses, winding and blowing among the thatch,—that is what I want."

"Whatever my Jessy likes," said Leonard, laughing as he took the hand which was stretched out to him. But the laugh meant that while he loved the beautiful being who sat before him, he did not intend to give up his own real enjoyment in life and society.

"Oh, Leonard, I know you don't mean what you say," said Jessy, her brilliant smile slightly shading over, and her eye falling on the blossom she held in her hand, leaf by leaf of which she had gathered off. "You never quite mean what you say to *me*, I know, Leonard," and she sighed.

Poor Jessy, *she* really meant it, when she said she longed to live alone, quite alone, with Leonard, in some

deep quiet wood, where she might wander with him through the live-long summer's day, and listen to his own voice through the evening reciting poetry, or reading to her and only her. He did deeply, devotedly love her, then why should he not feel the same? why should he not find all he wanted in the whole world in her?

Ah, Jessy, you shall not, must not, love those wild flowers so much; they lead you into error. It is a mistake, all those fancies about woods and solitudes. But never mind, may-be your sojourn here will be too brief to make it matter whether you learn your lesson or no. Love your wild flowers if you will; crown your brow with bind-weed, and twine those long fair tresses with the pale woodbine, as long as you will, they will scarcely hurt you, full of worship as you may be for them.

But the talk on wild flowers was over, and of Miss Nightingale too, and the company broke up and returned home, Jessy to think of Mrs. Thorburn, and Cicely to write a long letter to a Miss Baxter, who had gone out to Scutari with Miss Nightingale.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COTTAGE.

THE next morning at breakfast, as Jessy was waiting Mr. Seymour's coming, the servant brought a note to Jessy, it was from Mrs. Thorburn, and ran thus—

"My dear Miss Seymour,—I am going to see a sick person, whom I think you may like to see with me, who lives out of this parish, but I feel that some of the questions may be answered, which you suggested to me yesterday, by our going together.

"Yours affectionately,

"ALICE THORBURN."

Jessy wrote to say she would come, and as soon as breakfast was over, she made her way to Mrs. Mulso's. Mrs. Thorburn was waiting for her. Mrs. Mulso looked over the banister, with her little trinkets tinkling at her waist, and said, "Well, my pretty Jessy, I suppose you don't want such old people as we are now, only do not let Alice walk you off your legs. I dare say if you find it too far, she will not mind walking back with you. The poor woman won't die, I suppose, unless you saw her before night."

"Dear aunt," said Jessy, running up stairs, but the old lady had gone into her room to muse on Ophelia, and to put the china to rights, and to look out of the window, and to judge Mrs. Thorburn severely, and to be jealous of Jessy.

Mrs. Ward lay ill in the cottage to which they went. The house stood in a garden, far back from the road. It had been pretty, very, but now had a neglected air. Ward was a bad man; he had once been better, but had loved "this present evil world." She had ever loved God, and had clung to Him through all the changes and chances of her difficult life. She had brought up her children carefully and prayerfully, but

most of them had turned out ill. Their father's influence seemed to have strange hold over them. She was about forty, and had been chiefly known to the neighbourhood by having been neighbourly and kind, willing to help any one, and striving to guide all she could to God. She was dying quietly, sinking away in death, waiting for His call. She had been able to repose all on God, and expect His Will. Yet she had sore work, for all her efforts *seemed* to have failed her. Children and husband both had contradicted her prayers and earnest intercessions. Yet she was at peace under the firm belief, that some day and somewhere, things would be right.

Mrs. Thorburn went to her daily, and she looked to her visits. They were great points in Mrs. Thorburn's day. She was able to feel and realise on these occasions her near relation to the other world, and she fancied could almost see the scene to which she went. She knew that something would pass which would affect Jessy's condition of mind, and that Mrs. Ward's case was just the one which yielded hourly answers to the questions of Jessy's yearning heart.

It is a trite observation, that example is better than precept, and that the scenes of life leave a deeper furrow upon the memory than the most brilliant speech, or the most effective argument that can be used by the orator. There are few illustrations of this truth more universally known than the way in which, when for years perhaps our mind has been labouring under some distressing apprehension, or when we have had to lament some lack of energy with regard to the things of

eternity we suddenly cross the path of some chastened Christian, or of a man who has successfully struggled against the assaults of Satan. We are struck on the instant by the effect of the grace of God; we are arrested as by a voice from the dead; and feel within ourselves a change that the advice of years had not effected.

There are very few results which arise from visiting the poor in a country parish more striking than the way in which men who do so become aroused to their own spiritual condition by the circumstances that come across their daily path. In the patiently borne sorrows of poverty, in the kind forbearance which the wife will show to the husband who has tried her beyond the limits of ordinary human patience, and the calm trustfulness with which many of the religious poor cast all upon God, we learn lessons so striking as to deeply affect us in our intercourse with society, and to drive us to the prayers which we had forgotten.

It was under these impressions that Mrs. Thorburn felt she could do nothing better for Jessy in her condition of mind, than to take her to see one of those chastened servants of God, whose past life, and whose present condition were the best sermon that could be preached on the text of God's Word. Mrs. Ward was such a person. Poverty, sickness, long borne trouble of many kinds, had left their deep impression upon her pale countenance, and a brow upon which more than usual intelligence struggled to hold an equal dominion with anxiety and suffering.

When Jessy and Mrs. Thorburn entered the cottage,

the marks of decay and dishevelment met the eye on every side. In the little garden the flowers of the early spring were struggling across the gravel pathway which was already beginning to show the signs of the approaching verdure of the end of February. The doorway of the house hung loosely upon its hinges, and within it the little furniture that there was showed too plainly that the hand of her who ruled the destinies of that humble home had been weakened by the slow and gradual advance either of illness or of want. A three-legged table that occupied the centre of the room, showed that it had once known a care and a polish that now it was no longer able to manifest. Three chairs round the wall, three or four pictures that hung upon the whitewash, draped with the dirty cobweb; the tray that leant against the wall, and the small mahogany tea-caddy, with brass handle and brass lock upon it, speaking of a better day of health and wealth, were nearly the only furniture that remained, the wrecks of a past state of comparative affluence; and the sole remaining objects which had not gone into the hands of the landlord or pawnbroker.

By the side of a fire whose potatoe rind embers were slumbering upon the hearth sat the object of Mrs. Thorburn's visit. She was a woman of the middle age of life, neatly dressed. The tea things were spread upon the table, and the cat purred upon the floor. The woman was leaning her head upon her hand, while her eye was quietly gazing upon the red embers on the hearth with that vacant yet inquiring look which we so often notice in the countenance of those who are already

trembling on the threshold of eternity, and look as if they were peering through the opening doorway into the chambers of the unseen world.

On the entrance of visitors Mrs. Ward suddenly rose, a smile lit up her countenance on seeing Mrs. Thorburn, which showed plainly enough how dear to her the visits of her kind friend were. The Bible lay open before her upon the table, by the yellow and torn leaves of which Jessy could discover what had been the source of comfort, and the unfailing refuge of the sorrower in her day of affliction.

Mrs. Thorburn had in her short walk from the rectory to Mrs. Ward's, related briefly to Jessy the circumstances of the cottager's life. She had been born in better circumstances, and had been induced when young to marry a man below her in position both as to powers of mind and temper of feeling. He had soon made away with the little money that she brought him; and having run through the small property for which he had married her, treated her with that neglect and harshness, which is rather the normal condition than the exception of those who marry unequally. Four children cheered her days of sorrow, while they tended to irritate and aggravate the wound between the husband and the wife. She clung to each one successively as to idols which had been placed in her pathway, at whose shrine her broken heart might as she thought at least find an opportunity of lawful devotion.

Blighted in her dearest feelings, injured in her natural claims as a wife, she imagined that upon her children she might shower the devoted affection of a

mother's heart. But it was not God's will that that should be the case. Mrs. Ward had early been influenced by religion; was the child of many prayers and a dying parent's earnest intercession. It is with such as those that God seems often to work most severely. Where the place in heaven has been prepared from the earliest through the intercession of the people of God, He will spare no pains to cultivate and to prune the perhaps too barren branches of the tree; consequently one after another of those objects to which Mrs. Ward had clung, were removed from her tenacious grasp; and like Jacob of old, three times she had "risen up" before her cottage hearth, and "refused to be comforted."

Three times she had followed the bare and naked coffin to its last home in the churchyard, and three times without a husband by her side had returned to her cottage to mourn in silence and solitude over the empty place. Her fourth child had been left her after the other three had died as the one remaining comfort of her life. But a hip complaint settled upon him at the age of five years, and month after month her whole soul was devoted to the nursing the silent sufferer.

"Often," said Mrs. Thorburn, "have I gone in and seen that pale and flushed face, propped up as it was on pillows, on the arm chair that stood opposite the open door, and seen Mrs. Ward's quiet eye fixed now upon her work, and then on the face of her little boy; and trembled to think what would be the consequence of the removal of that last stay of her life."

Week after week James Ward pined away, and

though to every other eye the hand of death had already written the warrant upon his brow, to his mother's eye the hectic flush spoke of health; the brilliant expression of the eye spoke of reviving energy, and the cheerful manner of the child which chequered his day with the moments of fractiousness or dulness, assured her heart that he would grow to be a man. Earnestly she prayed that God would spare him; earnestly she prayed also that God's Will might be done. Still more earnestly she prayed that her own soul might be saved so as by fire, and no single stroke of God's chastening hand might be spared that was necessary to refine her soul from the dross of human affection. Her prayer was sincere, and God's answer was equally sincere. He is ever faithful; and especially manifests His fidelity to those who are faithful to Him. The prayer was to be answered, but God saw that in answering it it was necessary He should remove the last frail object against which she leaned, in order that on its removal she might sink back entirely upon Him.

Little James died in early spring. He died with his head upon his mother's shoulder; and his eye gazing up into her face, while he held between his thin fingers the bunch of snowdrops which Mrs. Thorburn had left an hour before, brought in with her from the garden at the hall. He died while she was almost saying, "I think he will live to be a man to repay me for all the trouble that he has cast upon me," and as she said it, she looked up and smiled, adding "God's will be done." Before she had looked back, a sudden hæmorrhage had

brought the fragile life to its close, and her little boy breathed his last upon her hoping bosom.

To describe the first hours of bitter anguish would be impossible; how desolate that home was, only those can know who having the heart to love, and being checked in the first objects of life, throw out the feelers of their affection towards beings, who one by one are removed, and leave those feelers in vain to seek for any object for their sensitive touch. Mrs. Ward followed her little boy to the same grave opened for the fourth time, where his brothers and sister lay, and the fourth coffin was dropped upon the other three, and hidden from view by the scarcely green sod of the churchyard.

She returned home alone, and as she walked husbandless under the hedge road, she did offer up her own soul to God, "The LORD has given, the LORD has taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD." "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, neither faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

Dwelling on these words, she reached her deserted home, and began to busy herself with arranging the table for her husband's return, and by putting away those last relics of her little boy that she dreaded might, when they passed under her notice, excite that degree of complaint or discontent which would be inconsistent with the character she aimed to attain.

The first object was, to see whether the death of his child would affect her drunken husband. For a few

short days it did. He allowed her to bring him to church on Sunday afternoon, and let her, without anger on his part, plead with him the warning of the death-bed of his child. But the Evil Spirit, which had been scared by the holier thoughts of the moment that followed the season of trial, soon wearied of the dry places in which it sought rest, and found none, and came back to its awful dominion over the soul which it looked upon as its own, and Ward became worse than ever before the summer flowers had blossomed on the grave of his child.

One long year of desolateness now passed over Mrs. Ward's head : but in that year she was daily knowing and seeking God. She was gaining a strength of character—an independence of earth—a dependence on grace which she never could have gained while the objects of her affection were left behind. It was in this condition of mind that Jessy first came across Mrs. Ward. The long seasons of want, privation, and disappointment,—the imbibed disease of her children which she had taken into herself in the hours of unremitting attention which she had paid them, had told on her own constitution, and she was fast sinking to her own rest.

"Pray sit down, Miss," said Mrs. Ward, smiling as she drew two chairs towards the fire. "I am so glad to see you, ma'am," she said, looking at Mrs. Thorburn, with an expression full of grateful delight.

Jessy could not but mark the neatness of her person, although the black stuff gown she still wore was in many places darned to hide the rags that otherwise

would have been too apparent; and the clean white apron which she had on spoke of habits of an early day of attention to decency, which are ever more affecting when we see them under circumstances which lead us to expect the contrary.

"I have been telling Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Thorburn, "that you might tell her some lessons that might be a comfort to her."

"Indeed, ma'am," said Mrs. Ward, "I should be very glad to be able to do anything for so good a young lady, as I am truly glad to see her here, for every one speaks in her praise."

"Miss Seymour has been talking to me," said Mrs. Thorburn, "about the difficulty that she found in early making God the chief object of her life."

"The LORD is my portion," said Mrs. Ward; "The LORD is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing."

"But," said Jessy, while the colour mounted to her cheek from that natural shyness and reserve that she had in expressing her own feelings about religion, and even at hearing others express theirs, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and her full heart now must have its sway; "Yet," said Jessy, "how can you really feel that, Mrs. Ward? Oh, I wish I could feel that God was everything to me. Now, do tell me; when you lost those you loved, were you able to be quite, quite happy in thinking about God? Did not God seem rather dreadful to you over the death-beds of your children? I always think—it may, perhaps, be very wicked in me, do not think the worse of me for saying it—but I always think that if

GOD were to take away those I love, I should look upon Him as so very awful, that I could not bear to go near Him ;” and Jessy suddenly stopped, while her flushed face, and her agitated manner showed that she felt she had spoken perhaps beyond the limits of lawful words.

Mrs. Ward smiled as she looked at Jessy, and said, “Oh, Miss Seymour, how well I once knew all that you now say ! When my little James died, I thought that GOD seemed an austere Master, and over and over again the Devil tempted me “to hide my one talent in the napkin,” and to give up serving one who seemed ‘to reap where he had not strawed.’ But what a different lesson I have since learnt !”

“Ah, there !” cried Jessy, “that is the point ! that is the point ! How did you learn that lesson ? How did you get rid of that awful idea of GOD ? How were you able really to love Him as much as you loved your little James ?”

Mrs. Ward could scarcely refrain from a smile, yet the tear would find its way into her eye, as she noticed Jessy’s earnest manner ; and she could not but feel in her own soul that surely GOD was meaning soon to call to Himself one with whom He was working through such anxious inquiries.

“Well,” said Mrs. Ward, “I will tell you exactly as far as I can remember how the LORD dealt with me. It seems to me now quite clear and plain that I never should have loved Him as I do now, or have understood what really love to Him meant, unless He had taken away all I cared for in this world. But when I lost

my last child, I over and over again had to make up my mind whether I would try to make God my chief object or not. I often used to say to myself, 'Where there is a will, there is a way;' and I used to go and earnestly pray to God that He would stand in the place of my little children, and help me to feel towards Him the love I had felt towards them. I used to say often, 'Thou knowest my frame; Thou rememberest I am but dust,' and at last the answer came, though very slowly, and I did get reconciled in my feelings to the loss I had sustained, and was able to feel, as well as to act upon the feeling that God stood in the place of those who were gone."

"Well, but," said Jessy, "There is the point—the feeling; I feel that I could *act*, but I could not *feel*; I should be so dull if one I fully, deeply loved was to die, that I think I should go mad, or I do not think I ever could have any peace again, or ever wish to go to Heaven."

"Well, Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Ward, "the next thing that I tried to find out each day was, what thing it was that God gave me to do for His sake, and what suffering He seemed to call upon me to bear with patience. I looked upon that as my one talent that He had given me, and I was determined not to hide it in a napkin, inasmuch as I felt sure He was not an austere Master. By that means I at last got a deeper and more real interest in trying each day to do something for God. And just as the working for my little child used to make me love him the best of all, inasmuch as his long sickness required so much care from me, so I

found the making each hour of the passing day an opportunity of serving God, made me care for God in a way I never otherwise could have believed that I could. So that by this time I hope I may with all humility say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'—'As the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee.'"

There was a pause, during which Jessy's eye was fixed on vacancy, and Mrs. Thorburn was occupied in silent prayer.

"Then," said Jessy, "you are quite happy?"

Mrs. Ward smiled. "Quite," said she, "I think; I only fear lest any pains of death might make me fall from Him."

"Oh Death, Death!" said Jessy, in a low tone as if talking to herself, "Death! what would I give if I had gone through that, and Leonard too: but I cannot bear to think of having to die—that makes Religion so awful, so cold, so terrible, so without comfort," and she burst into tears.

"Well, Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Thorburn, "surely there again, if you would take the path that Mrs. Ward suggests, you would find the same peace in the season of dying as you would of bereavement—I have been at many deathbeds, and I have ever noticed that those who were most anxious about dying, before the last hours came on, were enabled in proportion as they loved God, to meet the King of Terrors calmly and without alarm: and even to speak of being in the presence of the Eternal before nightfall, with a composure I had hardly thought possible."

"But," said Jessy, "do you think I could do that?—Oh! no, I love life—I love Leonard,—I love my father—the garden is gay, I love the flowers—I love the sunshine; I cannot bear the thought of that heavy breathing, and those last 'good-byes.' Oh! I cannot bear to think of the coffin, and the shroud, and the grave, and the corruption."

"'This mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory,'" said Mrs. Thorburn.

"Oh! yes," said Mrs. Ward, "that is true indeed. I feel that the prospect beyond death has made death itself so much less terrible to me, that I fancy I could almost meet the dark hour now with joy and peace. To me, almost I can say, 'To die is gain, to depart and be with CHRIST is far better.'"

"How I wish I could say that," said Jessy,—“I rather mean, how I wish I could feel it, for I am always saying it, but I cannot feel it.”

"Well, dear young lady," said Mrs. Ward, "the LORD will help you to feel it, depend on that—take hold of His Hand as you walk over the smooth paths of life, and He will not let go your hand in the rough ones.—Let Him cast His shadow on your sunshine, and He will shed His sunshine upon your shadows."

"Yes," said Mrs. Thorburn, "trust to Him to bring it all right. Rely upon it that from the top of Mount Pisgah the land of Canaan often gleams in its beauty, and that to those who stand upon the very bank of the Jordan the land that flows with milk and

honey appears in the lustre which it will possess when the last dark stream is passed."

"God grant it may be so with me," said Jessy.

"Yes," said Mrs. Ward, "and so it will."

"Try to think less," said Mrs. Thorburn,—“try to feel less and act more for God, and that will blunt those over-keen and sensitive edges of your feelings, which are becoming a hindrance and not an aid to your religion. God does not want us to reflect upon ourselves in the way you are doing it. Let us do what He tells us, and He will then cast the atmosphere of a holy and peaceful feeling round the soul in ‘which it will live, and move, and have its being.’”

They rose to go; the return home was spent in silence by Jessy and Mrs. Thorburn. Both were occupied in their own thoughts.

During the few days that succeeded the one I have just referred to, Jessy had three or four interviews with her kind friends; and though her aunt always seemed a little vexed when Jessy came, who after half an hour sitting with her, said that she wished to speak to Mrs. Thorburn, she at length grew accustomed to the request, and was satisfied to let her vexation pass off in some slightly satirical remark, or quotation from Shakespeare upon the subject. Most of these days Jessy walked with Mrs. Thorburn to Mrs. Ward's cottage, and it was their privilege to see her declining strength manifesting more and more trust in God; and the outward man decaying, yet enabling the inward man to be strengthened day by day. Nothing could have done Jessy more good than those visits. Con-

versations however lengthened, advice however powerful, appeal however touching never would have convinced her young heart in the way that that quiet chastened countenance, that settled calm eye, those softened tones of moderation, and entire resignation to God's blessed Will influenced her. She was not with Mrs. Ward when she died, though she died that February; but she followed her coffin to the grave with Mrs. Thorburn, when, on Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, she was laid there with her four children; and Jessie looked upon the coffin-lid, and then up into the quiet grey sky, which in the stillness of early spring, seemed hushing, as it were, the world, as the passed spirit was approaching the ETERNAL. She felt as if a load had been removed from her own mind, and religion was becoming a reality, which it never had been to her before. She was realizing the power of that consolation which S. Paul speaks of with so much force, when he reminds us that "no temptation has taken us, but that which is common to man;" and that "with every temptation and trial a way" is made of escape, "that we may be able to bear it."

These lessons came most opportunely to Jessie's mind, because she was exposed to many anxieties and troubles in connection with the movements of the war, and the frequent disappointments to her own sensitive feelings. There were troubles to her sensitive spirit which nothing but religion could counterbalance; but God ever tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and will not suffer "His rough wind to blow in the day of the east wind." He raised up Mrs. Thorburn as Jessie's

friend and counsellor at the very time when she was most needing it, and when the honest and true,—but not sufficient mode of dealing that Mr. Seymour used with his daughter, would have been an insufficient remedy against the sorrows and yearnings of Jessy's spirit. In her little room, through the window of which peered the old grey tower, Jessy now sought counsel and heavenly guidance from the Bible upon her knees in a way she had never sought it before. Religion was becoming a matter of reality to her, and the chime of the church bells summoning to the daily prayers, was ever looked upon by her now as the sweetest call that the week had for her. She was one who was gradually assuming shape; she felt that there was a definiteness coming out in her course, which the generalization of her religious education had hitherto prevented.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONVERSATIONS.

MR. Mulso's birthday was approaching. A day which he always kept with a large party of his friends, young and old, and which was always looked forward to with delight by every one.

"O Mrs. Thorburn, I am so happy, so very very happy," said Jessy one morning, a day or two before the party at Mrs. Mulso's, "I have had such a letter from Leonard: so full, so very full of affection. Oh!

how silly you must think me always to be talking of my own feelings and fancies. But you know you spoil me. You have been so kind to me."

Jessy had just come into Mrs. Thorburn's room, which I described before. She had walked quickly from home, her heart full of joy at the letter she had received from the Crimea. All seemed bright to her. Reader, are you tired of Jessy? Is she weak, and morbid, and tiresome? Bear a little with her. May be she is not alone in the world: and many there are who, if the truth were known, are equally anxious and fretting, only that they will not say what they feel.

Mrs. Thorburn smiled. She felt sincere joy and sympathy that Jessy was happy, and her countenance lit up with joy at her letter was enough to chase all sadder severer thoughts away.

"I am very glad, very, dear Miss Seymour. God is very good, and never suffers trouble to hang long over us. He is always waiting to clear the cloud away, and to bring the sunshine warmly to our hearts."

"Oh! yes, I know, I feel it," said Jessy, throwing herself down in a chair, "but I am so far too happy directly that everything goes so well. Religion appears all bright, and simple, and beautiful, and there seems a poetry even in death, just because I am happy; and then I think directly that that cannot be real; I fancy I cannot really be religious. Leonard's letter is full of affection to me; and he talks of the future, the happy future, when he will return, and we shall be together; and of all the joy of our union; and he speaks as if he did mean it, and it makes me so happy. But—"

"Well, I would not distress myself about that, Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Thorburn, "that, too, is a matter of feeling, and we cannot make religion rest upon matters of feeling. If you do feel that happy feelings about religion are too dependent on happy circumstances, you cannot help it. We cannot get out of our nature, nor does God expect it,—only leave it to Him."

"But you see," said Jessy, "the old trouble is on my mind. I want to feel that religion is something real,—something lasting,—something that will not break up and pass away, something——"

"Independent of yourself, and your own feelings, and circumstances, Miss Seymour. I know well what you mean. Multitudes know it, far more than say it, or express their feelings; though some feel it more than others. Some make religion more a matter of personal feeling than others, and with such people this is sure to be a common trouble."

"I dread so," said Jessy, "letting my love of God depend on the mood I am in; and only seeing God through the colour of my own feelings. It seems then to me as if there were no real religion at all. Do tell me how to avoid it. If that were my only way of seeing God, and loving the thought of Him, how shall I feel at the hour when I am dying, and when I have nothing to aid or bear me up which belongs to this world?—Oh! for something which——"

"Will never fail," said Mrs. Thorburn. "There, dear Miss Seymour, comes in the beautiful and glorious fact of our Blessed Lord's Incarnation. He became Man that He might give us a reality, or rather help us

to understand it and lean against it. The more you dwell on that, the more you study and meditate on the acts of His Passion, and divide your life according to the acts of His blessed Life, the happier for you. I believe many holy men of old have found wonderful support in dwelling continually on the Acts of His Life and Passion. It has given great reality to their religion. Then the use of the means offered by His Church becomes a great opportunity of making religion independent of self, and real. In the Holy Communion we approach Him; and using the means and encouragements offered by His Church, we find and lean against a framework which can support us, and which stands externally to us and separately from us."

"Yes," said Jessy, "I like all that. It is very very real,—very unfailing."

"There is one thing more I would say," said Mrs. Thorburn, "I should advise you to keep hours of prayer as far as you can. I have always found the deepest and most solid comfort from this practice. We become so desultory if we simply trust to our inclination to pray."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that if we have fixed hours, and that frequently through the day, of approaching God for worship, praise, penitence, and gaining grace, we shall find a power to realise Him and religion in a way which we cannot otherwise. Our religion will become more and more external to ourselves, and less dependent upon our own personalities and individualities. The very fear of going to God convinces us of His Presence

and the very fact of calling upon Him tends to give us a keener and purer sight of Him and His attributes."

"Oh! thank you," said Jessy, "very very much, I feel all you say. It is just what I wanted, and when Leonard comes home we shall feel, and understand and live upon it all together."

Mrs. Thorburn watched Jessy's departing figure as she pursued her way under the window at which she had taken leave of her. She had seldom seen her look more free and happy; less depressed with that anxious cloud which hung so often on her face. Jessy returned to her room to pray, to think, to read, to gaze on the old tower, to dream of future happiness, to read Leonard's letter, and to write another, to tell him, if she ever could, how much she loved him.

And, reader, you do not like Jessy, and you like Cicely best; and you think Jessy morbid and weak, and fanciful, and impractical? Well, I have nothing to say; I am not the annalist of human nature, but the war which is making it bleed, and weep, and hope, and energise. I am not concerned in saying whether Jessy is right, or Cicely is wrong, but simply in telling you that they are there with all those joys, and sorrows, and feelings, nearer to you than you imagine. More than you think who are like Jessy, are within your reach, to advise, to heal, to comfort, or to check.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. MULSO'S PARTY.

It was a very long time since Jessy had risen with a happier heart than on the morning of the 16th of April. It was the day of Mrs. Mulso's party, and busy preparations had been making by every person connected with the kind-hearted old lady, to aid in the success of the entertainment. To Jessy seldom had a party of the kind appeared in a less unwelcome aspect, she sincerely did not enjoy society of that kind, and when she said that she had much rather not go out in an evening, she really meant it—very few do. She had many reasons for not enjoying society, which are common to some like her; she did not feel she had either ability enough or information in reading sufficient to give a return to society for what she received from it; she had not the power of conversation, and therefore she did not enjoy conversation. We all enjoy what we can do easily; and when we know that another is pleased with us, we are pleased with ourselves: thus we all work round in a circle of a certain selfishness.

"It is so selfish," Cicely used to say, "to retire from society, and live only in and for yourself."

"My dear," said Mr. Loraine, "I think you are rather harsh on your mother and Miss Seymour owing to their not wishing to go out. There may be, as far as I can see, as much selfishness in going out as in staying at home; after all, many of these ladies, who talk of going out to please others, would be vastly disap-

pointed if these others were not pleased with them. All life, my dear Cicely, is a reciprocation after all. But really we are getting very deep, and I am no philosopher. You must go and ask your uncle Robert about the philosophy of the question; all I know is about its practical bearings, and I have often said about Miss Talbot, when I have seen her in society, it is all very well for her to blame poor Mrs. Allen for not going out as much as she does, and then look like a martyr to self-sacrifice, but I should very much like to know what Miss Talbot would do, if she had as little chance of making an impression in society as Mrs. Allen has. I doubt if we should see her so often in the sphere of her self-sacrifice."

"Dear papa, how very severe you are!" said Cicely.

"Oh, my dear, I didn't intend to be severe, I am delighted to see you enjoy society as you do, but I don't want you to be judging Jessy Seymour harshly. But I have done."

And then there was another reason why Jessy never cared much to be out, she loved to centre all her interest on one point, and that one point was Leonard; she could not scatter her interests or her affections; the love and interest of many people is like the ray of the noonday sun, widely diffused over a thousand objects. Her love was like one single ray of moonlight, which finds its way between the boughs of a still wood by night, and, settling upon some mossy bank, reposes there amid surrounding shadows, giving light and life, and still, quiet, happy joy to a hundred beings, which

make that bank their home for life, and know and want no other. It was a grief, if grief could ever penetrate a spirit like Leonard's, that Jessy did not love society more, for he was born for it, made for it, and Jessy tried to overcome and conquer her aversion. To-day she had succeeded more than usually, and determined to go and enjoy the party at Mrs. Mulso's. Cicely was to come at one o'clock, to arrange about her dress, for she had promised to dress as Cicely wished; and Grace was to come at eleven to go with her to old Mrs. Tilley's, to take her a basket of good things which Leonard had sent the money to buy through Jessy. Jessy's heart was lighter and gayer than it used to be owing to her conversations with Mrs. Thorburn, which had tended to give her a more just estimate of herself, and enabled her to take more bold and resolute steps in life.

She had come down to breakfast earlier than usual, and Mr. Seymour found her busily engaged arranging the hyacinths in the window and singing to herself, as she placed them.

"Jessy, my love," said he, "what is to be the order of the day at your good aunt's, do they have dancing, or what?"

"I don't know, dear papa, they always have, you know; anyhow, it will be a very merry party."

"Why, what is going to happen?" said Mr. Seymour, "my solitary little nightingale seems all on a sudden converted into the lark, and to be courting the busy path of life, instead of the solitary boughs, which she used to make her home,—you must have had some

unusually good news from the Crimea, that you have not told your old father of."

The breakfast passed off cheerfully and happily, and Mr. Seymour had no reason any more to doubt the accuracy of his judgment as to Jessy's more relieved spirit. Jessy retired to her room to wait for Grace, and to do what young ladies seem never to have finished doing, write letters. A figure rapidly passed the window and in the next moment she heard Maxwell's voice shouting, "Jessy, Jessy, where's Jessy? She heard his footstep in the passage, and the next minute he was in the room. "News, Jessy! news! cried Maxwell; "glorious news!" The colour came and fled from Jessy's face, showing that what Maxwell, Cicely, or the world would call good news might be no good news to her.

"Now, don't look so frightened," said Maxwell, "there's nothing happens but what you young ladies always think that you must be frightened." Had he been speaking to Alice or Cicely he would probably have put his opinion in stronger terms, but Jessy had a strange influence over Maxwell, and did more, in her own quiet way, to soften down his boyhood, and bring out the points of his character, than any one in the world; and that is the province of a girl.

Maxwell held a letter in his hand, in a tantalizing manner; but she had seen quite enough to feel sure that the news, whatever it was, had reference to Leonard; "Oh, do not tantalize me, dear Maxwell, what is the news?" for by his laughing eye she had told already that, whatever it was, it was not bad.

"Well, you are a good Jessy," said Maxwell, "and you do deserve to hear good news, as did any of those faithful lovers in the Arabian Nights, although it isn't a fairy or one of the genii that brings it to you, but no other but plain honest Maxwell; I will keep you no longer in suspense, but tell you the news of your good knight, borne upon the wings of rumour; but now, to drop all Eastern allegories, Jessy, look here." So saying, Maxwell showed Jessy a paper he held in his hand, containing an account of an exploit of great danger and hazard lately achieved in the quarries round Sebastopol, in which Leonard had signalized himself and for which he had received an expression of praise from the commander-in-chief, and been mentioned in the military despatches at home, (and what was, shall I say, more than all to Jessy? no, reader, I will not tax even your good nature so far as that, for you are perhaps already more than half inclined to be provoked with Jessy,) Leonard was one of those appointed to come home with despatches from Lord Raglan, and was likely to set out in a week from the day of the date of the letter. Jessy read over and over again the paragraph before she could quite comprehend its intelligence: could it possibly be that Leonard could come back? would she again see Leonard sitting in that arm-chair, and hear him again reading in her little room? She stood gazing at the intelligence, while Maxwell seemed lost in admiration of the lovely face before him. "How soon?" said Jessy, looking up at Maxwell as she spoke, "how soon?" when at that moment, a knock was heard at the door, and Cicely

Loraine entered with her usual brisk manner, as if the business of the whole parish was on her, and she meant to do it in the most cheerful, decided, and earnest way in the world.

"Oh, Jessy, I am two hours and a half before the time," she said; "I didn't come to stop. But what is the matter, Jessy, why you seem perfectly entranced!" Jessy looked up radiant with smiles.

"Of what," cried Jessy, "have you not heard all about it?"

"Oh, you mean about Leonard's return," said Cicely, "yes, I am very sorry for him, it will unsettle his mind so." Jessy looked at Cicely, and did not speak; though for the instant, something more like indignation and anger than was usually seen on her face quivered on her lip.

"Indeed," said she.

"Oh yes! to be sure," said Cicely, "he will be spoilt with flattery, and fancy that he has won the crown of life, when he has hardly earned a chaplet."

"But he *has* earned one," said Jessy, with a feeling of indignation; "have you read this?"

"Oh, you mean that affair in the quarries, we have been talking of nothing else all the morning; it is very satisfactory, it is worthy of a Loraine; but he does not stand alone, there were some ten others complimented with him, I think."

"Were there?" said Jessy, "I only saw his name."

"Oh, what nonsense you talk," said Maxwell; "how beastly it is of you, Cicely, to try and make the most of the matter. You know you are as proud as Lucifer

about Leonard. Very few sisters have such brothers to be proud of as you have."

Cicely smiled.

"Well," said she, "Leonard has many softnesses and faults which need roughening off, and more of the sterner discipline of life will do him good."

Jessy's view was widely different. His eventful life of one brief year had made him shine to her as a hero of old: and then, as to the view of a fine roughened character, to say the truth, she did not like half the words of that sentence. She would fain he would remain very much where he was. She dreaded the chasm becoming wider between them.

"She keeps the gifts of years before,
A withered violet is her bliss,
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all she loves him more.

"For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he—he knows a thousand things.

"His faith is fixed, and cannot move,
She daily feels him great and wise,
She dwells in him with faithful eyes,
I cannot understand: I love!"

But it was of no use; Jessy found talking of no avail when Cicely was in the case, and she had a kind of intuition that Cicely was in the right.

"Then you'll be back at one o'clock," said Jessy.

"Yes," said Cicely; "I only came to leave a letter

from papa with Mr. Seymour, and to tell you the news about Leonard, only Maxwell got here before me."

What, then, you do care something about Leonard, Cicely, do you?

CHAPTER XXVII.

INKERMANN.

BUT we must now return for a short time to the events that were occurring in the Crimea, and to those circumstances which followed the unexpected disaster attendant on the cavalry charge at Balaklava. As we have seen, Leonard had been a spectator of the event, while Dennis lay ill in his tent.

It will be for posterity to decide more easily than we can on the amount of blame or credit to be attached to that celebrated charge. The period that immediately followed it was one in which the operations of the siege oscillated between success and failure in such manner as to disappoint continually the expectations of Europe. But a few weeks passed away before that next remarkable battle, which stands foremost in the terrible events of the campaign.

"On a detailed map of the Crimea a path is shown, which branching to the right from the Woronzoff road, going towards Sebastopol, descends the heights to the valley of the Tchernaya, close to the head of the great harbour. On this road the second division were encamped across the slope.—The road passing over the

left turns to the right, down a deep ravine, to the valley. To the right of the road, the ground first sloping upwards then descends to the edge of the cliffs opposite Inkermann. From the first the Russians had shown great jealousy of any one advancing on any part of the ground beyond the ridge. As soon as any party, if even two or three in number, showed itself there, a signal was made from a telegraph to the ships in the harbour, which immediately sent up shot and shell at a good range.

"About noon on the day after the action at Balaklava, a Russian force was seen from the Naval Battery, sallying from the fortress, and, shortly afterwards, the pickets of the second division were drawn in. Volleys of musketry on the ground between the ridges showed the affair to be serious, and a battery from the first division hastened to join those of the second in repelling the attack, while the Guards were moved up the slope in support. Some shot from the enemy's field-pieces were pitching over the ridge, behind which the second division were lying, while their skirmishers met the enemy down the slope, and the guns of the second division had come into action on the crest of the hill. The battery of the first division ranged itself in line with them, and the enemy's guns being at once driven off the field, the whole eighteen pieces directed their fire upon a Russian column, advancing half way between the ridges:—unable to face the storm of shot, the column retired precipitately down the ravine to its left, where our skirmishers fired into it, and completed its discomfiture. Another strong column then showed it-

self over the ridge, and after facing the fire of the batteries for a minute, retired the way it came. Presently the first column, having passed along the ravine, was seen ascending in scattered order the height beyond; at fourteen hundred yards every shot and shell pitched among them, our skirmishers also pressing them on their rear and flank. The Russian skirmishers under the fire of our guns and musketry, retired, turning to fire as they went, and in less than an hour from the beginning of the combat, the space between the ridges was cleared of them. This was the first attack that the Russians made upon the position at Inkermann, and was a preparation for the more formidable assault upon the now celebrated place that bears that name, and which should have been after this warning, placed in a better condition of defence, against an enemy that showed so great a vigilance and so great a knowledge of the weak points of our army."

During the early part of November an exchange of prisoners effected between Lord Raglan and the commandant of Sebastopol had given Mr. Randall his freedom. His first object was to repair to the quarters occupied by Leonard and his servant Dennis, who was now fast recovering from the effect of his wounds, and the shock that he had received from the perils attendant on his escape. The few days that intervened between the arrival of Mr. Randall and the celebrated conflict of the 5th of November were occupied principally in conversations between Leonard and his friend. There is no doubt that there is a close and

probably Providential connection between the circumstances of our life and our own deep impressions, and that it is emphatically true of such things that coming events cast their shadows before, as in the case of the tremendous outbursts of nature in the West Indies, the long and brilliant calm of the preceding evening impresses with an inexplicable awe the inhabitants of the fertile islands who know well enough that on the motionless wing of the evening air is borne the electric shock that will kill to-morrow. So when death, or great peril, or even news, is upon the wing there is a quiet and solemn stillness round the apprehensive mind which seems a sign that God is speaking by coming events. So these four days that intervened between Mr. Randall's arrival and the battle of Inkermann were occupied principally with Leonard, and one or two of his more serious-minded companions in conversations with the good clergyman on things connected with death and eternity.

It is a striking circumstance that the army and navy present us with as great extremes in point of religion as any other position in life, and while we are surprised that men wandering along the border-lands of death and danger can be loud in oath and blasphemy above their fellows, so we are often surprised, and at the same time grateful, to witness a calm and trustful religion and dependance upon the Providence of God, in those who know that any hour may be their last. While, in fact, recklessness marks the wickedness of the soldier, the most unusual simplicity and reality mark his religion. Our regiments have ever shown some of the

most vigorous impulses of religious energy, and Wesleyanism in its most powerful day found as wide a scope in the troops of the Peninsula as in the chapels of John Wesley, or the old Connection. As far back as the military history of the world extends we find the constant recognition of God by the warriors of celebrated conflicts. The soldiers of Switzerland bowed in prayer before the first volleys of the battle of Granson, and Charles of Burgundy mistook the reverential attitude of intercession for the craven bending of the coward or the fugitive. We would, indeed, regret the absence of such a spirit amongst our own soldiery, and earnestly promote any effort which might be made to send the knowledge of penitence and pardon to men who so peculiarly are standing on the very border stream between time and eternity. It is a momentous question whether in the present war we are meeting this case as we ought, and whether we should not estimate much more than we do the comparative and superior importance of giving the ministrations of religion to hundreds and thousands of our fellow Christians who must meet God in a few weeks, rather than applying the whole machinery for those ministrations to the wants of men which are not so imminently pressing. Why has it not been suggested by the genius of our Church that a Bishop of the right kind appointed to superintend the work of the Church, on the seat of war, might be in the position to achieve a work for human salvation that might rival in energy and success the glorious travels of Francis Xavier, or the strenuous earnestness of Ignatius Loyola? A man who might bring to bear in its original power and sim-

plicity the message of pardon and peace to an emphatically dying world; but, alas, we have not done it. What may we not have lost by our lack of elasticity?

It was on subjects very similar to these that Leonard and Mr. Randall occupied the interval to which I have referred. There were two friends of Leonard's who sympathised with him in his better aspirations, though the cast of their opinions was, as is generally the case with soldiers, rather of a low Church than a high Church tendency. Captain Arthur Hudson and Lieutenant Toinby had, ever since their departure from Varna, joined with Loraine in his efforts to bring to bear the instructions of his youth, and to affect for good those around him. Hudson was a man who expressed all he felt, and could not sever the idea of religion from its continued expression, while Loraine was, as we have already seen, one who retained and suppressed feelings far deeper than those that met the eye of his companion or the world.

It was on the night of the 4th of November, when the British troops had been enjoying a comparative repose, and the allied army looked upon themselves as secure of the great city they had come to take, that John Dennis, who had now nearly entirely recovered from his wounds, had requested of Loraine that he might be allowed to receive the Holy Communion.

"There is no harm, is there?" said Loraine to Mr. Randall, "in John receiving the Sacrament. It has not been administered for the last week or two in public, and surely there can be no reason against his receiving it in the tent, as he would in his father's cottage."

“None in the world,” said Mr. Randall. “I can conceive no more fitting opportunity than the present of receiving the sacred Feast.”

Accordingly in the stillness of the tent the three friends, John Dennis and Mr. Randall were occupied during the earlier part of that evening in fulfilling the command of their SAVIOUR. A similar quietness reigned around the folds of their wandering abode; and a deep stillness seemed to have hushed alike their own passions and excitements as the stir of war around them. The sacred Feast at an end Loraine spoke :

“I do not know how it is,” said he, “but I feel more than usually under a depression of mind this evening. I have read many stories in which depressions precede remarkable events, and I cannot help thinking that we have been led by some special Providence to the act we have just performed. Mr. Randall, do you think that we ought to trust to these impressions?”

“Surely,” said Captain Hudson, “they are the immediate voice of God, appealing to us, and I would as soon discredit them as I would my Bible.”

“With regard to that,” said Mr. Randall, “I have no hesitation in thinking that we should attribute much more than we do to the influences of the spiritual world. We cannot but imagine that the vast and countless millions of spirits which have been released from their earthly tabernacles, ranging through God’s universe, and the countless hosts of angelic messengers who are continually going on messages from the Eternal, should really affect our minds and circumstances in a very high degree. Still more when we come to consider

how deeply God Himself is concerned for our salvation, and how many of those who have departed are as earnest and more earnest now for our full repentance and pardon than they were when they interceded for us on their knees in the chambers of life."

There was a minute's pause; after which Leonard looking up with some degree of surprise, said, "Do you really mean, Mr. Randall, that you think the spirits of those who have gone have the power to affect those who are left behind? If so, what a tremendous thought is a field of battle, where, at every instant some spirit is being freed from the body, and left hovering round the form of a companion whom it just now conversed with."

"Awful, indeed," said Mr. Randall, "but nevertheless we are too much inclined to get rid of truth because we dread its awful aspect. There is something tremendous to our feelings about such a thought, but we may not neglect its influence; God, you may rely upon it, frequently checks and warns us through means of this kind, and I doubt not there are many along this camp who at this moment are either obeying or resisting instincts which are Heaven-sent, on which perhaps their eternity will depend."

"That is very true," said Captain Hudson, "very, and I only wonder that clergymen like you do not put forward the view much oftener. It seems to me that men in your line are far too fond of dealing in questions which appeal rather to the common sense and the reason than to the more imaginative faculty of religion: I think it is cowardice."

"Well," said Mr. Randall, "in some respects I think you are right. There is no doubt that many men are afraid of taking for granted the great unseen world and range of unseen truth, and only feel comfortable when they are appealing to principles which every one around them, even the worst, would find it difficult to deny. There is in this a moral cowardice and doubtless often in attempting to save ourselves from the sneer of the world, or the imputation of narrow-mindedness, we are running the hazard of injuring those who are leading high and spiritual lives, and sometimes shaking the very faith of men whom the world would call transcendental and mystic."

"Then," said Toinby, "it is quite clear, Mr. Randall, that you think we ought to attend to *all* these bodings. Is there not a danger of that superstition for which the army and the navy are considered to be so peculiar?"

"Superstition," said Mr. Randall, "seems to me only to refer to the practical use of a certain impression of the mind. If a man trusts to internal bodings, apprehensions, or feelings, and is not led by them to a recognition of the great cause of all, by penitence, or humiliation, or holiness of life, he does deserve the name of little better than a superstitious man, but if those impressions drive him to his knees, to amendment of life, and to seeking pardon, his superstition seems fast to melt away into the most real and efficient religion."

"Very true," said Hudson, "admirable. Yes, my dear fellow," said he, turning to Toinby, "if those

feelings you have described, lead us to pray and to prepare for death, anyhow the time is not lost, or the opportunity wasted. I quite feel with Mr. Randall, that the superstition of the army and navy, is such from ignorance and from an unpractical result arising from religious impression. If only that were corrected, we could not hail too thankfully the inclination to see some superintending agency in every circumstance of life."

The friends parted for rest, but before they rested the conversation of the preceding hour led more than one of them to that close and strict examination of the past, and that earnest solicitation for forgiveness, as would have been enough to give the hope to everyone connected with them, that if they were carried off by the chance of war on the next day, they would go to heaven. How sad to think of the multitudes who in the crisis of battle, or on the eve of death are called by the voice of God from heaven, or are touched by an angel in their midnight dungeon, bidding them follow him, but lost in the vision and the dream of ignorance, they refuse to follow the guiding hand, and the angel departs from them. No iron gate opens of its own accord, and no Rhoda comes to the gate of the Church to announce before the throne of God their happy arrival at His presence. It was not so with our friends. Each one rested that night wrapped in his military cloak, or propped on the rough pillow of the campaign, in the sure and certain hope that if he should die ere morning broke, he was at peace with God through JESUS CHRIST. And that morning broke more suddenly than they expected. They had all fallen

into a deep sleep. John Dennis was in the tent with his master, and Mr. Randall was asleep by the side of Leonard Loraine. At four in the morning Leonard was startled from his sleep by a sound which he did not on the moment comprehend. He went to the door of his tent, and saw the thick and heavy mist of November rising like a curtain from the ground, and bedewing everything with its cold and chilling drops. The tall forms of tents and soldiers could just be seen peering out here and there through the crevices of the mist, which made him feel more that he was in the land of the Genii of the Arabian Nights, than amongst beings of his own century and country. Having reached his tent door, he listened attentively for a sound that had already begun to grow louder upon his ear. It was like that of distant thunder amongst hills, or the wind rolling up from a ravine, struggling for release. He listened longer still, and he felt sure that the sound proceeded from the tramp of footsteps and the roll of wheels. His tent was pitched upon the very edge of a rapidly descending down, which ran into the Inkermann road, through which the river Tchernaya found its way. Far to the left lay the village of Inkermann and the town of Sebastopol, while to the right lay the harbour, and opposite another range of cliffs, leaving the road below along the defile. On the sloping bank were a number of trees and a quantity of brushwood, so memorable in the events of the day, while a little to the right of Leonard's tent was a small battery, which became in the struggle the scene of so much heroism and so much death.

A little further again, a sinus in the hill offered an easier and sheltered descent into the valley at the bottom, which led the unfortunate and gallant Cathcart and so many of our brave troops to a rapid and terrible death.

It was on this position that Leonard was now standing, wrapped in his cloak, for the morning was cold, and listening to the sounds which became every moment more unmistakeable of the advancing Russians. There was certainly not a moment to be lost. No one was ready; no one was expecting the enemy. Lord Raglan was far away, and General Bosquet was in the rear with the troops of our allies. Sir De Lacy Evans had more than once warned the Commanders of the necessity of fortifying and defending the edge of this road, but it had not been done; and the sagacity and vigilance of our enemy had discovered the weak point.

Seizing a horse which was near, Leonard without returning to his tent galloped as hard as he could to the tent of his superior officer, and gave the alarm, but he had scarcely done so before the whizzing sound of balls announced to the thin line of sleeping Englishmen the near approach of their terrible foe. The scene in the course of the five minutes which Leonard took to return to his position was more like a sudden waking up under the wand of a magician, of beings who had been lulled to a long sleep by some evil spirit, and were suddenly called to tumultuous life by a more powerful agency. In every direction could be seen men starting from their tents, half asleep and half awake, not knowing what the tumult meant, and not even

sufficiently aroused to recognize the old sound which had been so well learnt at Alma, and so clearly understood since—the Russian artillery. Some men were springing on horseback—some were seizing their muskets, some dreaming of home started from their cloak, from the tent, or from the ground, with the name of a wife or a child upon their lips; some lay dead before they knew why they had been so hastily aroused. Breathless servants rushing to tear open the tent to call their masters. Scared grooms holding the stirrups, and staff-officers galloping by called out in accents of alarm, that the Russians were upon them. Leonard hastily rushed into his tent, aroused Dennis, who moved to his post, though the excuse of his recent wounds might have been sufficient to have spared him, and calling Mr. Randall, who he knew would wish to be ready for any emergency of danger to his perishing fellow-creatures, himself rushed out again to join the line.

The morning was intensely dark, and cold, and foggy, as much so in the Crimea as November can make it in an English lane or upon an English common. The wide-spread plains of the neighbourhood of Sebastopol were already beginning to show their tendency to create a thick and unctuous mud, and the grass and other herbage saturated with wet, offered but a damp receptacle for the slumberers of the hill side. The cold mists rose up ever and anon from the valley urged by almost imperceptible streams of air, and gave the impression of movement in the atmosphere which so mysteriously affects us in foggy days in England, when we almost imagine that the elements have

dropped between themselves and our gaze a veil which may hinder our seeing some new changes which they are effecting among themselves. During the darkness of the night and the morning the enemy had gathered in force in the valley of the Tchernaya; a marsh renders this part of the valley impassable, except by the Woronzoff road, which after winding round the sides of the hill, stretches across the low ground. With much difficulty the Russians must have driven their artillery across this in the night. The wheels had been muffled, and they were pausing till some check from our lines might afford the opportunity of a further and impetuous advance.

The dawn became the signal, and the enemy attacked the advanced posts of the second division which fell back, after the confusion had arranged itself which I have just described, upon the camp 1200 yards in the rear. Captain Hudson, whom Leonard met going out to his post, was shot through the knee as Leonard passed him, and fell to the ground.

"Do not stay for me," he said, "Lorraine; it matters but little; our conversation last night was a blessed one, it led me to prepare myself for my meeting with my SAVIOUR. My poor dear wife and children are my only concern if God calls me away,—God protect them!" and the gallant fellow sunk to his knees upon the wet earth, and drew his soldier's cloak around him with the prospect of a fearful struggle close to him, and the tread of thousands passing over him, as patiently and calmly as if he lay down on the pillow of his home to sleep.

The outposts driven in, the hill was immediately occupied by the enemy's field artillery, and the spot in which Leonard's tent had been, was in this brief interval teeming with the grey coats of the Russians. Over the brow the shot came bounding, dashing up earth and stones, and crashing through the very tents which were still standing. Men were struck off their horses, and close to Leonard one officer was hurled from his saddle by a round shot, and fell dead.

At the first alarm the crest in front of the tent was occupied by some troops of the second division, and some vigorous opposition was offered to the overpowering columns of the enemy that were now rapidly emerging from the fog. But no man knew against whom he was opposed. There was no plan of battle. It was simply a desperate hand to hand struggle for life and for resistance. The guards were fast advancing to the help of the long thin line upon the hill. They came up in succession and passing on each side of the guns checked the enemy's advance. The plan of the Russians was, after sweeping the ridge clear by their heavy fire, to launch some of their columns over it, while others moving off to the left side might pass over to the edge of the cliffs opposite Inkermann and turn the British right; but, as in most celebrated battles, one small point has been the focus of the struggle, as well as of the eye of the visitor of after days, as Hougomont is the centre to which all attention is drawn on the field of Waterloo, so it was destined that in the battle of Inkermann one single point should be struggled for with a pertinacity that seemed ill to justify the large sacrifice of human

life and blood. That point was the battery of which I spoke just now. It was opposite the ruins of Inker-mann. Into this the gallant guards threw themselves, the Grenadiers on the right, the Fusiliers on the left, and the Coldstreams across the slope towards the centre of the valley. Towards this point the Russians now directed their full assault. Multitudes were killed in the embrasures of the battery, and the guards constantly attacked and attacking with the bayonet had lost half their numbers, and were compelled to retire exhausted.

One of their officers, Sir Robert Newman, was left within the battery when they retired. They quickly returned, but only to find Newman pierced with bayonet wounds and dead. He as well as many others had been butchered in that brief instant by the victorious Russians. It was now the turn of the guards to drive back the Russian infantry when a cannonade began again along their whole line, illuminating the fog with a hundred forks of yellow light, and seeming to tear to tatters the heavy sullen mists of the November morning.

The battery now a second time was the point of attack, and Leonard and his men were ordered to enter it for the purpose of defending it. Nothing can be more tremendous than the few minutes that he then spent; death on every side, and the air perforated with the hailstorms of bullets. The Duke of Cambridge galloped past the battery as Loraine was cheering on his men, and with singular gallantry trying to maintain his position. The Duke as he passed quickly

by noticed the young officer, and commended him afterwards. In this way the battle continued to rage with unabating fury, until Lord Raglan's arrival at about nine in the morning, who having brought some eighteen pounders to bear upon the Russians, the result became more satisfactory and effective upon their lines.

Sick from his bed on board ship, Sir De Lacy Evans rode up with his aide-de-camp, looking extremely ill, but cool and intrepid as he always was in action, at about nine o'clock. Having arrived on the spot he turned to speak to a soldier who was close to him, when a shell rose from the ground, passed two feet over Sir De Lacy Evans' head, and dropping into a group behind, exploded. Sir De Lacy Evans did not turn his head. Officers and men fought the battle without food. It was two o'clock before any of the leading men broke their fast. At about this period the struggle seemed to be nearly hopeless, the accumulating forces of the Russians bearing upon our weak and lengthened lines seemed perfectly irresistible.

Leonard, whose company had been beaten out of the battery, and who had again a third time occupied it, had been wounded in more than one place, and felt that he could hardly have maintained the conflict another half hour. A fourth time the Russians rushed at the battery, pouring in tremendous volleys of shot on every side. Leonard was brought to the ground stunned by a contusion, and four or five of his men fell dead close at his feet. He still however remained with perfect intrepidity at his post. It was at this moment that a loud shout ringing across

the lines seemed to bring some prospect of better news, and looking round Leonard saw the cheering sight of a battalion of French advancing quickly towards him. In two minutes more many of them had leapt on to the battery amid a shower of bullets from which they escaped unhurt. This was Bosquet's division, who had come up in the very crisis.

The battle now began to turn, and the Russians finding the occupation of our ground utterly impracticable, were evidently inclined to recede towards Sebastopol. But however it was not before much more carnage and a dreadful excitement of rage and passion had been manifested.

The confusion of the battle was singular. There were hardly two parties who were acting immediately under orders, and the whole was more like the broken billows of an advancing sea lashed by a storm, than the onward and united action of the tide upon the beach. The arrival of the French decided the victory, but it is quite impossible to describe what the general effect of that day's hard fighting was on the minds of those who had been joined in it. The whole front of the battle field was three quarters of a mile. Nine hours of close battle had left the conquerors no inclination to be elated. In the bushes around were wounded men groaning in such numbers that some lay two days before their turn came to be carried away, horrible with ghastliness, crying out in vain to each one that passed within call for water; while here and there groups of the dead lay with their heads resting upon each other's bosoms, and upturned faces towards the

sky which alike spanned the land of their own homes and the scene of their death.

"The faces and hands of the slain in battle," says an eye witness, "immediately after death assume the appearance of wax or clay, the lips parting show the teeth, and the body of him half an hour before a smart soldier wears a soiled and faded aspect." It seemed perfectly hopeless to attempt to alleviate the mass of human suffering that lay on all sides around.

The moon of that night had never looked down on a more ghastly spectacle. Nor had the broad and placid orb been gazed at by more agonized eyes than it was on that terrible night, so strong must have been the conviction in many that they were realising the exquisite anguish of dying but a little before they met that God for Whom they had never lived one whole day in life. Mr. Randall spent the night, as did one or two other clergymen, in moving about amidst this awful hospital of dead and dying, trying to administer what temporal or spiritual consolation they were able. It was indeed a dreadful scene, but what an opportunity for men of earnest sympathy and Christian benevolence, for men who realise in its full and wide force the saying of our Blessed SAVIOUR, "That inasmuch as ye do it to the least, ye do it unto Me." Would that such men, if such there be, would feel that their vocation would be fulfilled by one night spent in a scene like that which the bushes and the slopes of Inkermann presented on the morning of the 6th of November. Mr. Randall long afterwards in narrating the circumstances of that night, spoke with awe, and almost with horror, of its

scenes, which showed how deeply impressed they had been engraven on his memory, and how upsetting to the equipoise of the mind and the feeling, the witnessing such events must be; but his deeper feelings had found the safety-valve of practical energy: and in relieving the wants and anguish of the dying, he had softened down or blunted the keener edge of the awful and the horrible.

A battle is much more than a battle; it does not present to our minds generally the notion of simple hard fighting, but the struggle and contest of great intellects and schemes, the successful or unsuccessful stratagem, the consummation of a long strife of principles, the crisis of some party which is for the future to be the dominant one in the state or in the world. In fact, around the great battles of the world, with their various manœuvres, characters, and characteristics, might be coiled all the leading events and principles of their own age; and we shall find that Mr. Creasy has struck out a most important *memoria technica* for the philosophy of politics and political history, when he suggested to us that the great battles of the world were very much more than they appeared to be. In saying this, I mean that the very arrangement of the battle-field indicates to a certain degree, the principles and the characters of those that are employed in it. The ships at Salamis, the wings and the centre at Marathon, the plain of Pharsalia, the relative position of the light armed and heavy armed troops indicated the character of Cæsar or of Pompey, of Themistocles, or of Aristides. So the long lines upon the hills of

Salamanca, and the arrangements at Torres Vedras as much showed the genius of the Duke of Wellington, as did his general success in the campaign, or his vast conceptions in the counter movements against Massena and Soult. In the same way the Battle of Waterloo is much more than a mere fight upon a corn-field between so many thousand English and so many thousand French. The very arrangements of the field, the position of the Guard, the pointing of the cannons, the squares of infantry studding the slope towards Hongomont or La Haye Sainte, the approach of the Prussians towards the left, the use made of the Wood of Soignes as much indicated the distinctive characteristics of Wellington and the Saxon race, as did the impetuous charges of Napoleon, his own position on the road to Charleroi, the last desperate plunge made with his guards, indicate the peculiarities of French genius, and Napoleon's in particular. While this has been the case with all battles, it remains for posterity to determine the principles involved in the arrangement of Inkermann. There was no plan, there was no foresight, there was no preparation, no expectation; there was nothing but one desperate defence of a long narrow ridge by a thin stream of an army, whose shallow lines were simply useful for displaying the desperate courage of the British soldiers. In that light the battle of Inkermann has a principle, and will stand prominent in the page of military history. Its principal acts belong as much to the leading features of the present war of our own country and of this age, as any other circumstance in it. The age is one which has marched ra-

pidly in advance of all expectation, and whether in the lines of politics, science, art, military achievement, or civilisation, we are in equal doubt as to what the end is to be of the principles on which we are working. We are rather following a great instinct than arranging an entire conception ; we are interested in pursuing the characters of our tale into their own plot, rather than having formed a plot in conceiving the characters that are working it out. We are rather interested in our heroes leading us on blindfold to the termination of their own fifth act, than in seeing to the end of that fifth act before we create our heroes.

This seems to be the principle of the impulsive, impetuous spirit of the period in which we live. The prestige of the past has been the impulse which both suggested and carried into execution the invasion of the Crimea ; it was supported by that that our victorious regiments burst through the Russians on the crowded hill of the Alma ; it was supported by that that Lord Raglan so successfully yet so hazardously burst through the low wood lands on the east of Sebastopol ; it was supported by that that our gallant soldiers rising from their damp foggy beds on the ridge of Inkermann on the morning of the 5th of November, received with such unbroken and unvaried courage the tremendous shocks of their unwearied foe. This then may be the principle of the great battle of Inkermann, which will illustrate the whole principle of the war itself, and of the age which has given birth to it.

Amongst other disastrous consequences of this hard-fought fight were the deaths of the gallant Cathcart and

Strangways, neither of which should be omitted by the humblest annalist of this eventful period. The most brilliant in point of expectation in the British army, Sir George Cathcart, who had successfully brought to a termination the long Caffre war, ended his military course in an act of courage, which may perhaps oscillate between that virtue and the doubtful one of temerity. Seeing the Russians pouring in unswerving masses up the sides of the ravine, and noticing one sinus which offered an opportunity for himself to take the Russians in flank, he made a desperate effort with his regiment to descend the slope; he had no sooner done so, than he discovered his fatal mistake, and that the opposite side was fringed with musketry, and lined with artillery, in such a way as to command without the slightest obstacle the whole of his devoted column. The mistake was perceived too late to return and nearly all his gallant followers were put to a speedy death by the rapid volleys of the Russians, followed up by the bayonet, and Cathcart himself fell amongst the first at the head of his regiment. His death and the fatal enterprise that led to it, forms but a single episode of the whole battle, which is of itself an episode of the war; daring and desperate beginnings entered into for the sake of discovering through their pathway some aid or solution to an unfathomed, and hereby an explained difficulty.

General Strangways riding by the side of Lord Glan was early in the day struck by the fragments of a shell which had already laid low two of those who were near him. The gallant general finding himself

mortally wounded requested to be lifted from his horse, and in the short interval that intervened between his death blow and his last breath, his words of gentleness and kindness to those around him, his recollection of those at home, his simple messages to his comrades in arms, have marked the death-hour of the veteran soldier with those peculiar characteristics which the soldier alone is able to combine, simplicity of character with daring and heroic self-devotion.

So fell Strangways and Cathcart, and so fell a thousand others into their honoured tombs upon that bloody hill. Peace be to their memory! In a future day, when the stir and din of war has ceased, and when, perhaps, Sebastopol will be a ruin for the summer traveller to gaze at, or the bird of prey to soar over; when her churches, her hospitals, and her walls, the Mamelon, the Malakoff, and the Redan, will be but objects to gaze at for the traveller whose aim is but curiosity, when the cannon of besieged and besieger will be buried in the sand, and the sheep will gaze into its harmless mouth, then the Englishman will visit, and visit with a tear the honoured grave of Chester upon the hill of Alma, and of Strangways and Cathcart over the ravine of the Tchernaya. The heaps that are gathered there so rapidly forgotten in the quick succession of battle, of siege, of victory, and of reverse, must in future days be singled out in our recollection as the shrines on which youth and courage, ambition and love of glory consented to lay their chaplets and their honours down, and in the cause of Britain and liberty

give up the long ambitious future for the momentary self-sacrifice of pain and of success.

The scenes that took place immediately after the battle of Inkermann were terrible in the extreme. The moon that night shone down on forms of human beings which will never recur to the mind of those that saw them without feelings that will shadow the merriment of the most brilliant fireside, and check the joy of the most exciting scene of earthly happiness. Here into the bush had crept Russian and Englishman together, mutilated in limb and writhing in the agonies of death, parched with the thirst that no human hand was able to relieve, and in some cases laying their heads upon the bosom of their bitter foe, death making all equal and reconciling in its pale and awful hour those whose hands had been directed against each other's lives but a day before. Many remained in this position during the night, the following day, and the night that followed, before any relief could come to them, and before even they were discerned by any but the bird of prey which soared over them expectant of their death. The scene as described by the correspondents of some of our own papers, especially of the "Times," of that awful night transcends all the vivid descriptions that we have received from the spectators of the scenes of what occurred in this war. The battle lasted for nine hours, and those nine hours were a period of incessant carnage. The whole field was strewn; and where the Guards fought in the Sand Battery there was a terrible pre-eminence in the slaughter. The sides of the hill were

heaped with the bodies, and the noble guardsmen with their large forms and faces lying amidst the dogged low-browed Russians presented a sad contrast to those recollections that we had of them in the streets of London, or on the day when they first left the metropolis for their glorious course, and devoted end. We have seen pictures of the scene after the battle, where guardsmen lay in front of that battery dead with their arms still raised in the very act of thrusting with the bayonet, and killed in the moment of pointing their own aim. The groans of those who had tried to reach bushes for shelter and lay some days before any one came to help them, were truly appalling. And yet in the midst of these scenes the love of revenge and plunder could not restrain even the wounded Russians from assaulting their dying enemies where they lay. Large trenches were dug on the ground for the dead. The Russians were placed in one by themselves; and the French and English side by side. There was a marked difference in those who died by the bayonet, and those who died by the musket shot. The numbers that fell around Cathcart presented in their faces great anguish of expression, inasmuch as the great mass of them were slaughtered at the point of the bayonet, while around the Sand bag Battery the heaps that lay gazing into the sky above them bore in many cases expressions of calmness where the musket ball or rifle had made its hideous but rapid wound, severing instantaneously the bonds of soul and body.

Leonard fought gallantly throughout the whole of this memorable action. He scarcely left his post for a

moment, which was in the neighbourhood of the Sand bag Battery, and at one time, as I have said, within it. Dennis fought with equal courage within sight of his master. The scene was one which perhaps remained as vividly upon their minds afterwards as any in the war, although, as Leonard often said, the first moment was the worst, as far as apprehension went, for from that onwards nothing but extreme excitement and occasionally actual forgetfulness and unconsciousness of what was going on, were the leading features of his mind and condition.

From the conclusion of the battle of the Alma the Russians retired to a great degree within their batteries; and early in November, the weather that had been hitherto mild, grew gradually foggy, moist, and raw. The horizon of the Black Sea became blocked with mist, and the surface soon changed from the blue of summer to the cool grey of winter.

It was on the 14th that the strong wind set in that drove before it a flood of rain so plentiful that the tents swelling in beneath the blasts, left no slant sufficient to repel the water which was caught in the hollows, and filtered through.

This event began that second period of British sufferings in the Crimea, far worse than the first, that in which they had to contend with the elements, the sky, the earth, and the sea. But of that anon.

From that time onwards till February the sufferings of our troops have transcended perhaps that of any other army in a similar expedition, and have called forth a feeling of indignation from our own country,

and have set on foot those investigations which have tended so little to raise the credit of our nation as one which was suited to meet the emergency and crisis of war in the middle of the 19th century.

Such were the leading events of November. I return from them to the scenes that were going on in England in connection with those who are mixed up with our heroes in the war.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEWS.

JESSY was at last dressed for the party, but it was late before the last touch was put to her attire. Maxwell had remained at the Rectory determined to bring Jessy with him to Mrs. Mulso's. The boy felt that peculiar interest about her which is so often felt by the younger brother of one who, as in Leonard's case, had secured the affections of youth, and loveliness and tenderness of mind. Maxwell, though but fifteen, and more wedded to the stable and the race-course than to anything more heroic or refined, had such an admiration for his future sister-in-law that she could almost turn him from any purpose in spite of his obstinate will, and with a look of her eye could melt into softness the rough word or the hasty expression which broke from his lips, or swelled in his heart. Jessy knew her influence and was pleased to exercise it. Maxwell was conscious of the power she held over him, and was

not careful to withdraw himself from it. On this occasion he seemed more than usually attentive. Perhaps the mere circumstance of his being the messenger of such good news, and having heard from her own lips the soft accents of gratitude to him the bearer of it had tended to draw out in greater force than usual his devotion to Jessy.

Mrs. Mulso's party was to begin at seven. It was early, as many young people were to be there, and dancing from an early hour was to be the order of the day.

Mr. Seymour repeatedly called down the passage to Jessy's room to know if she was ready. He was one of those who made a point if he dined out at seven at a house a quarter of a mile's walk from the rectory, of ordering his carriage round at half-past six, and not to rest until Jessy and himself were seated in it if possible before twenty-five minutes to seven. The inevitable consequence was that their arrival at their host's was greeted by the sound of footmen's steps hurrying in rapid movements over the hall, while the first sight that met their eye was the last jerk of the footman's coat on to the shoulder, and the pale blue light of the lamps that had not yet assumed their brilliant yellow; the last footstep that hurried up the staircase told that the youngest son who had just arrived from Lincoln from his day's work, had remained in the drawing-room reading the latest novel while the footman had been lighting the candles, and had been only scared by the sound of Mr. Seymour's carriage wheels to his dressing room to prepare for dinner.

These indications by no means perturbed Mr. Seymour, and simply brought upon his countenance that smile which was ever the ready antidote to positions of difficulty and anxiety, though Jessy used very often to feel a certain degree of discomfort at what she imagined to be the solecism which they had committed in manners, and would remonstrate with her father against committing the same again. Her remonstrance met with no other reception than a kinder smile than ever from her father, with his hand placed upon her head as he said, "My pretty Jessy shall come as late as she pleases to any party, so as she will consent to let her good old father go alone," which was the best speech he well knew to draw from his child some new expression of devotion and affection for himself.

On this evening, however, whether fascinated by the attentions of Maxwell, or thrown off her usual equipoise by the news she had just received, or perhaps, reader, you may agree with me in thinking that the third reason is more likely, namely, that she had been sitting now already half an hour before the glass in her own little room trying to arrange a wreath of artificial jessamine in her hair in exactly the same posture and manner in which Leonard had wreathed that well known crown of jessamine some months before, and over and over again had dislodged some leaf or petal from some lock of her hair under the impression that it did not look exactly as it had looked when Leonard had turned round and smiled in her face, calling her his beautiful Jessy, and declaring that he would challenge the country to produce one that might rival her.

Oh, woman, how weakly do you cling to the memory of words uttered in days long gone, when the words themselves were perhaps but the impulse of a fleeting moment, and when the incidents that have crowded into the interval may have made those words a greater mockery still. Yet you can cling to them through years and years of patient suffering, and even when the tongue that uttered them has crumbled to dust in the grave, the words which were signs of attention and admiration of your qualities remain still the guiding notes of your onward march through life.

"My good Jessie, we shall be too late," were the words that had now three times sounded along the passage from poor Mr. Seymour, who with his hat on and his gloves in hand, had been waiting in desperate anxiety, only broken by twice hearing the church clock strike, first "seven," and then a "quarter past." He had done all he could to relieve the vacuum of his mind by putting straight the cards that lay upon the hall table, by examining the barometer ten times, by comparing his own watch with the large staircase clock, and by conning over and over again the relative positions of Battersea and Wapping on a large map of London that hung over the hall table. But even these interesting occupations by degrees became pointless and barren, and the awful recollection that he would lose a character hitherto untarnished and come in at a quarter to eight instead of seven to good Mrs. Mulso's, broke down all his equanimity, and Mr. Seymour was, for nearly the first time in his life, almost out of temper.

"I think," said Jessie, smiling, as she turned to

Maxwell, "all is right now." Maxwell who had been gazing for the last five minutes on what he thought the unrivalled loveliness of the being before him, caught her hand, and looking up into her face with that eye of passionate love which boyhood perhaps alone knows how to give, said,

"Oh, Jessy, yes, I will write and tell Leonard how you looked."

"Hush, hush, Maxwell," said Jessy, as the colour rapidly fled over her cheek; "Leonard would not like you to talk so; Oh will it not be happy when Leonard comes back,—Do not tell Cicely that I said so, but Maxwell, imagine perhaps the next party we shall go to together, he will be here too." Maxwell did not quite like the allusion, for he had seldom felt more proud than on that occasion when he led Jessy Seymour forth from her room to meet her father in the passage, and to conduct her to the carriage which waited at the door. Maxwell sprung in after her, holding in his hand a little nosegay of white camelias and dark green leaves that he had gathered for Jessy at her own request. There was something about the boy that had already begun to assume the air of one who was ready to assume the *toga virilis*. He had the thoughtfulness, the self-command, the composure, the steady gaze of one of more mature mind. His mother and his sister would have been astonished had they seen Maxwell in that carriage with Jessy. Jessy was not astonished, for she knew him in these positions, his home did not. He was hovering between boyhood and youth; he was standing on that difficult border-

land between fifteen and eighteen : a border-land over whose rough and rugged soil, and through whose deep and dangerous streams no hand can so well guide the youth as that of the sister or of the girl whom he loves with the feeling with which Maxwell loved Jessy. But by this time the carriage had drawn up to Mrs. Mulso's-door, and the sound of music, the burst of merry voices, the tread of rapid feet over the floor, the deep hum of more learned conversation, the treading to and fro of footmen's steps, and the housemaid's hesitating run as she lingered on the threshold to gain another insight into the interior of the drawing-room, or on to the guests that were coming into the hall, burst on the eyes and ears of the unhappy Mr. Seymour, of Jessy and of Maxwell. It told too truly to the former that his character for punctuality was gone, although he instinctively pulled out his watch, and beginning to compare it with the large mahogany clock which hung over the hall table, was on the very point of calling out, "Why, Mulso, your clock is at least three quarters of an hour fast," but in a moment the painful reality seemed to cross poor Mr. Seymour's face, and he consigned his watch to his pocket, and his hat to the table by a simultaneous movement, as with a sigh he offered his arm to Jessy, to conduct her to the room of dancing. As Jessy entered many eyes were on her. There were several things in connection with her that had attracted the interest of many in the neighbourhood ; besides which her own appearance was one which would naturally have attracted admiration and attention. As she entered she was leaning on the arm of Maxwell. The

moment she came in Grace and Alice ran towards her. "How beautiful Miss Seymour looks," was whispered around the room, "she has not got that sad and anxious look that she so often used to have." "I cannot imagine what there is to admire so much in Miss Seymour," said Miss Tatler to Mrs. Bathurst, who was sitting at her side, "her beauty almost seems to me to be of the most vapid and empty description; it has no point, no character, no mind, no spirit."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Bathurst, "I cannot quite agree with you; I am not one of those who peculiarly admire Miss Seymour's character, but I think she is very lovely." This rebuff by no means pleased poor Miss Tatler, who had thrown out the insinuation with regard to Jessy's beauty, with a view to breaking down some one of those many obstacles which stood in the way of her attaining the position of unrivalled loveliness. By this time Jessy was fairly in the room, and had begun to talk to those who had gathered around her. The joy, the happiness, and freedom of her manners had attracted the notice amongst others of Mrs. Thorburn, who was sitting on the opposite side of the room when Jessy entered. The evening passed away as most of such evenings do, quadrilles and polkas for the children, while the grown-up people sat like an assembly of Grecian Gods, gazing down with cold marble eyes upon those around, while here and there one or two a little more elastic, bowed beneath some mysterious influence, such as affects from time to time the heads of our friends under the influence of priestcraft

Maxwell asked Jessy to dance. "Oh, no," said Jessy, "you know I hardly ever dance."

"Do," said Maxwell, "do dance with me, Jessy—do not refuse me; I long to dance with you."

Jessy rose, and little Grace turning to Alice said, "I never saw Jessy so happy as she is to-night—do not you wish that Leonard could see her?"

"Yes," said Alice, "she does look very pretty—I only wish she would not wear those flowers in her hair—why does she not wear the red camelias that we sent her?"

"Oh, you know," said Grace, putting up her finger to her lip, "there is a story about that jessamine that she has in her hair, and Jessy, they say, would not give that up for all the world." Alice smiled.

Few houses were more suited to hospitality and convivial meetings than Mr. Mulso's. It had large, low, wandering rooms and mysterious passages filled with deep recesses, across whose openings leant vast port-folios, and up in whose dark and dusty corners behind cobwebs that had been trellised there for the last ten years, lay old faded crayon portraits with their faces leaning against the wall. Then there were the large landing places upstairs with the railing across one side, and the dark umbrageous ivy boughs that beat against the octagonal window in the corner, making mysterious noises to children who hid in the shadowy evening, or who sported and danced there on the wet summer's day. Then too those huge old mahogany chests which had stood piled and terraced up against the ceiling as long as Jessy could remember, and almost as long as Mrs. Thorburn could, giving a degree of mystery to the house which added very much to the entertainment of those

great gatherings of all his grandchildren, and niéces, and nephews that Mr. Mulso was so peculiarly fond of having. Not only was the house suited to meetings of this kind, but also to leaving a deep and indelible impression on the minds of children. The mind of childhood is peculiarly open to association, and the seed dropped in through its furrow lies buried deep down in the heart, and springs up in a long afterday, affording shadow and protection in hours of sorrow and trouble, when the scorch of the world would wither up the heart's affections. So great is the influence of associative power, that it is wonderful that men do not make more of it, and when we know that the circumstances that surround childhood, the place, the person, and the thing leave so deep a mark for an after day, it is singular that we have not learnt the great importance of arranging with intention those circumstances in such a manner as to influence the after life of the young. What duty can be greater than that of the parent in giving true, and deep impressions to their children! as important as teaching the mind to reflect, or the memory to retain simple knowledge. Few minds had been more under the influence of those associations than those of Jessy and of Leonard in the house of Mrs. Mulso. Jessy's tender spirit had ever trailed itself over the framework which that home and garden afforded her.

On this occasion she entered more than usually into the feelings which belonged to the place. Her mind was relieved of a burden; a shadow had been chased away by the many conversations which she had had with her new and kind friend. As she entered, as I

said, every one noticed how much happier Miss Seymour looked, and every one was inclined to congratulate her on the news, which had already begun to circulate in the society of the neighbourhood in connection with Leonard's success and unexpected return. Various coteries had assembled round the room before the Rector and his daughter arrived, and the sound of music had already begun to mark the social and convivial joy of the well known gathering. The large ample curtains that hung from the windows veiled off the outside scene, which to-night would have been dark and dreary enough, but which in summer time was singularly beautiful; for the framework of the three windows fringed with ivy gave a finish to the enamelled picture of garden, fields, distant view, and church tower which could be seen through them. The long grand piano, which Jessy had known nearly ever since she was born, stood against the wall, and the large cupboards by the side of the fireplace into which as a child she had so often looked anxiously to find some hidden treasure, or some basket of comfits which had been secreted by Mrs. Mulso with the intention of distributing to her eager company of grandchildren, met Jessy's eye on this occasion, bringing a thousand recollections to her. It seemed in fact as if her greater freedom of spirit opened out her mind to all these sympathising objects around her, and awakened the slumbering eyes of the long past to gaze upon her as upon one that belonged to them, and in gazing upon whom they found their object and their aim in the great world of matter. Jessy was doomed to hear all kinds of opinions in cir-

culatation with respect to the war. Of course Leonard's position was discussed, Mr. Loraine's influence in the neighbourhood, and the way in which he was respected alike by the rich and the poor, made Leonard a kind of common property, so that Jessy's ears on this occasion were fully gratified by hearing him mentioned on all sides of her.

Mr. Bathurst came up to Cicely who was sitting not far from Jessy, and said, "Well, Miss Loraine, I have to congratulate you on the return of your brother. It will be a very great pleasure to you to see him after the many adventures he will have to relate, and the honourable manner in which he has achieved his duty; it must be a source of the greatest satisfaction to you all at the hall to welcome him home again so soon."

"Indeed," said Cicely, "we do not altogether feel so; I believe my father agrees with me very much in thinking it would have been better if Leonard had not returned; Leonard is too fond of home associations, and our original wish was that he might have thoroughly roughed it in the war before he came home. I am almost afraid the example being given by so many officers of wishing to leave the Crimea to return may have influenced Leonard's mind also."

"Well," said Mr. Bathurst, "I see the force of your argument, but still it will be a very great satisfaction to your father and mother to see him under such peculiarly happy circumstances."

"Oh," said Mrs. Loraine, who was sitting not far off, and leaning forward on hearing Leonard mentioned, "all the pleasure of my son's return is cancelled by the extreme anxiety that I feel about his reaching home in

safety. They say disease was raging in his regiment, and if he has incautiously undertaken the journey when he is at all weakened by sickness, I cannot tell what may be the consequence.—Cicely, my dear, has your father heard anything more this evening about your brother, I feel it difficult to restrain my own anxiety. Has the ship been telegraphed, or has his arrival been in any way noticed in the paper?"

"Oh, no, dear mamma," said Cicely, "there is no chance of that for several days yet, as far as I can understand."

Mrs. Loraine looked disappointed, and summoned her husband who was standing on the rug talking in a small knot of gentlemen on the events of the Crimea.

"Indeed, my love," said Mr. Loraine, "I can tell you nothing new;—I believe we may expect Leonard now any day."

"It will be a very great pleasure to you, Mr. Loraine," said Mr. Seymour, "to welcome home your son; I have to congratulate you sincerely on the high credit that he has gained in the war."

"Thank you," said Mr. Loraine, "young men are bound to do their duty, and I should have been very much surprised if Leonard had neglected his. He is a good fellow, and has always been so, but I do not wish him to be overwhelmed with flattery on his return, and spoken to as if the simple doing his duty were anything that raised him beyond the common lot of mortals."

"But we are in the habit," said Mr. Seymour smiling, "of not thinking that the common race of mortals do do their duty, and therefore my friend Leonard may I hope

receive a word or two of goodwill from his old friends at Brandon."

"As you will," said Mr. Loraine, "for my own part I shall wish Leonard's stay to be as short as possible; I have had highly flattering letters from his commanding officer, and at the same time a strong advice that he should not have any check put upon his speedy return by his family, and I am therefore determined to use every influence of my own against any desire on his part for changing his regiment or leaving the war."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "that seems to me perfectly unnatural; how you can desire that your own child should return to a scene of such hazard and peril! for my own part I have lived upon the hope that Leonard's return now may be a permanent one, and will preclude the necessity of his return to the scene of danger."

"Horrible!" said Mrs. Mulso, who had been sitting near, "I cannot conceive what you mean, Mr. Loraine; it seems to me the most unnatural thing I ever heard of, that a father should desire his son to be exposed to such dangers as our soldiers are in this lamentable wicked war. I well recollect how in the late war parents rejoiced at the slightest opportunity of welcoming home from fearful dangers those whom they loved. But I suppose it is part and parcel of the new light of this day to see a great virtue in war, and to think that the very best position for one's child is under the bayonet or the grape shot."

"My dear sister is sarcastic," said Mr. Seymour, smiling, "she will not let you off very easily, Loraine, if you venture to protrude any of your views that are

at all of the new school with regard to our natural feelings."

"Feelings," said Mrs. Mulso, "they seem to be obliterated wholly from the category of human nature. Every one now is like a marble book without leaves and without letters, hard and stony; it seems to be the principle of this day to go against all the principles of the past, and to violate every natural feeling of the heart. I cannot bear it; I would not for all the world give in to so unnatural a spirit.—Jessy, my dear," said Mrs. Mulso, turning round to the Rector's daughter, who had been sitting talking to, or rather being talked to by Mr. Cruttenden during the last twenty minutes, while her vacant eye which wandered away from her companion, resting now on Mr. Seymour and then on Mrs. Mulso, showed that her ears were open to their conversation, and that her attention was little able to be fixed upon the remarks that Mr. Cruttenden was making on the certainty which he now had that Sebastopol and its siege formed the battle of Armageddon, and that the last crisis of the world's history was on the very eve of completion. Poor Jessy's vacant "Yes's" and "Is it so" might have convinced any less conceited young man than Mr. Cruttenden that all his remarks were being thrown away, but he was one of those who derived more satisfaction in talking, from the conviction that it gave himself of his own powers and knowledge than he did from the information he either received from or gave to another, and consequently whether he noticed Jessy's vacancy or not, it would not have much mattered to him. Poor Jessy was doomed to have many a wound inflicted during that evening. Cicely's

stern and practical common sense view of Leonard's position ; his father's strong impression as to his duty, and the somewhat feeble support, as Jessy thought, that Mr. Seymour gave to the other view of the case, raised at one time her indignation, at another time her distress, and at every time feelings of sadness that she could not shake off. " But never mind," said she to herself in her heart of hearts, " he will be here presently, and then with him I shall care for nobody and for nothing ; what will it matter to me what anybody says or thinks of me, or of my acts or belongings, when my whole mind and soul and being are wrapt up in his ?" In those nest-like thoughts, deep sheltered from the ken and observation of any around her, Jessy took refuge at this moment of distress.

Mrs. Mulso's impassioned speech pleased and delighted her, and she smiled on the kind-hearted old lady, who, coming up to her, stroked her forehead with her hand, saying, " My pretty Jessy anyhow will have nothing to do with our friends of the new school. She belongs in every part of her to the reality that I love, and Jessy at least," said the old lady archly smiling, " will sympathize with me in not desiring that Mr. Loraine should be detained longer in the war than is necessary." Jessy did smile although she lived in terror of Cicely's sarcasm or of Mr. Loraine's brisk and rapid manner ; but on this occasion her spirit was too light to quail before those obstacles, and she laid her hands on Mrs. Mulso's arm, as she led her to the other end of the room to introduce her to a partner for the quadrille which was just getting up. Maxwell stepped quickly across the room as one whose eye had

been fixed for some time past upon a victim, and going up to Jessy, said, "Jessy, you promised me the first dance. No, Mrs. Mulso, you must not take Jessy away, she is engaged." Jessy slipped her hand through Maxwell's arm and allowed the boy to lead her to the head of the dance.

The merry music rang round the warm and brilliantly lighted room; and before the rapid steps of many a gay and joyous dancer, the cheerful laugh of many a one whose heart as yet had known no sorrow, the kind words of good old Mr. Mulso returning thanks for congratulations on his birthday, admiring the forms of one or other of his grandchildren or his nieces as they passed quickly by in the quadrille, Jessy forgot altogether her own trouble, and laughed with the merry and danced with the gay.

She did not notice in the movement of the dance, and in Maxwell's conversation that any new person had recently entered the room; but some one had entered it since the dance had begun, and had summoned Mr. Seymour from the rug. Had Jessy's eye been disengaged to watch the countenances of those that were gathered round the fire, or had Maxwell's mind been less attentive to his partner, they might have been struck by the slight confusion that was going on at the further end of the room. Mr. Seymour had withdrawn from the room, and had returned looking pale and agitated. Mr. Loraine with a calm and subdued tone had approached his daughter Cicely, while the paleness of his lips and the evident self-command that he was putting on himself, would have told any ordinary observer, that something had occurred which agitated more than ally one who passed with so much power of reserve

through the circumstances of daily life. Cicely had risen immediately upon her father's bidding, reading in his eye that something was the matter.

"Where have they all gone?" said Mrs. Mulso, coming up. "There is something the matter, I am certain: do tell me what it is."

Mrs. Mulso's agitated and impassioned voice startled many of those who were within ear-shot of her. First the dancers ceased, and then the music paused, but by this time all the leading personages who had been conversing round the fire had left the room, and no answer was at once given to Mrs. Mulso's inquiry.

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Mulso to the servant, who had just entered, "where is your master; where are Mr. Seymour and Mr. Loraine gone? I must know if there is anything that is the matter."

"Indeed ma'am, I do not know," said the servant, "but a messenger brought a letter about a quarter of an hour ago, which he begged me to give to Mr. Seymour, and Mr. Seymour it was who sent for Mr. Loraine out of the room." A faint cry from Mrs. Loraine, who had been all this time, wonderful to say, talking in a quiet way about the character of a servant that she was wishing to hire from Mrs. Tatler, and had noticed nothing of the change in the conversation which was going on in the room; but hearing her husband's name mentioned, and that in connection with Mrs. Mulso's agitated manner, brought immediately apprehensions to her mind. Her cry at once brought more than one person to her side. "Where is Mr. Loraine?" said she, "and where is Cicely? Maxwell, my love," said she, calling Maxwell from the side of the room where

he was standing, "go and see where your father is. There is something the matter." Her anxious mind had already anticipated some accident to Leonard, or some thwarting of her high-formed expectation of the pride with which she should see and receive her son. But Maxwell had another work to do. His eye was fixed upon but one object, and his whole attention was given whence it could not be removed.

Pale, with her lips nearly colourless, her large blue eye fixed in all but vacancy upon the countenance of Maxwell, with her hand clinging with a closer and a closer grasp to the arm of her protector, her mouth half open to ask the question which the eye too fully had anticipated, and with a breath that seemed suspended on the dreadful moment, Jessy, whose attention had been throughout the evening so turned towards one object, now had reached the climax of the power of attention which had deprived her for the moment of utterance. "Oh, Maxwell, go and see what is the matter."

"I cannot leave you, Jessy," said Maxwell, "do sit on this sofa."

"No, no," said she, "I will come with you; where is papa? he is gone; where is Cicely; where is Mr. Loraine? Oh, look, Maxwell, Mrs. Loraine is calling you; do go to her."

"I cannot leave you, Jessy," said Maxwell, never having been more a man than he was at that moment, and never having more acted for himself than at this instant, in which all the deeper feelings of his nature were brought to the surface. "I cannot leave you, but do not be frightened; there is nothing the matter."

At that moment the door opened, and a youth entered and walked up to a girl who was standing near Jessy, and who asked the new comer what was the matter. "I am sorry to say," said he in a low under tone, which was not intended to be overheard, "that there has bad news come from the Crimea."

"What—the loss of a battle?" said two or three voices at once instinctively. Maxwell tried to draw Jessy away. But in vain, nothing could then draw Jessy from the spot in which she stood waiting to hear what might fall from the lips of the youth.

Maxwell's next impulse was to rush towards him, and charge him with silence, but that was equally impossible, for the same tenacious hold that kept Jessy standing where she was, kept her hand fixed upon Maxwell's arm. Manceuvre as he would, he could not avoid the fatal blow that he saw was imminently pending. "No," said the boy, "no lost battle, but in one of these skirmishes about the Quarries, several officers have been killed, and Leonard Loraine has been shot with a miniè ball and is dead."

The girl to whom he spoke, uttered a cry, and said, "Oh, how dreadful! poor Miss Seymour!" for in the neighbourhood round the relationship of Jessy and Leonard had become well known.

"But, hush, hush," said the boy, "we must not speak so loud, or we shall be overheard; poor Mr. Loraine is very much upset by the news: he was very fond of him, and no wonder, he was a gallant fellow; but come, Alice, quickly, we must be going, and leave Mr. and Mrs. Mulso to do what they can for poor Mrs. Loraine and her family in this sad business." So say-

ing, the youth and his sister passed quickly by to leave the house to comforters and sorrowers.

One after another of that gay group passed by, wishing farewell to their kind hostess, who, bewildered with the fragments of news which had reached her ear, scarcely knew whether she was welcoming or dismissing her guests. Group after group faded and vanished off into the passage, and down the staircase; and the lights that hung upon the wall had flashed their radiant lustre with equal brilliance as when the music rung round the cheerful room, and the step of the dancer was heard upon the floor. But their light fell now on but two figures, who were left alone, for Mrs. Mulso following the departing line, had determined upon finding out the secret; and poor Mrs. Loraine had long ere this found her own way to the adjoining ante room, where the ill news was being read.

The room was left to two, and those two were Maxwell and Jessy. The shaft had stricken home;—the arrow had been sped from no erring bow which had hurtled that evening in the air. No soft gazelle pursued by the hunter of the hill, chased hour after hour, worn and giddy with its onward flight, ever paused in some deep ravine, the rocks around seeming to shut out the flight of the hunter's shaft, it thought itself safe, then started with one last bound on hearing the shout of the hunter and the bay of the dogs as they turned upon its last retreat, as did Jessy at that fatal word; all her sorrows and anxieties that had passed away, now turned to meet the news for which all the past now seemed but the preparation. Maxwell stood not knowing what to do. He dared not break that silence, he

dared not move, he dared scarcely breathe. His eye was fixed upon the countenance before him, and that look and that face Maxwell never forgot. He could not remove his eye from the steady gaze with which the large blue eye was fixed on him; he could not if he would have attempted to loosen the hold of that hand on his arm. A footstep was heard outside the door; it opened. Cicely Loraine stood in the doorway.

"Is Jessie Seymour here?" said she, not knowing that the news had reached her. "Is Jessie Seymour here," said Cicely in a voice that evidently required some self-command to prevent its breaking down.

"I am here," said Jessie. "I am here, Cicely; has Leonard come? I will meet him at the door; come with me, Maxwell; we should not be the last, you know; you see they have all gone out to meet him. I told you how it would be, I knew that that messenger had come to say that Leonard had come, and he said, 'Where is Jessie?' and I was not there to meet him. Come, Maxwell, why do you stand and look so at me? it is not right to do that, you know. Maxwell, come with me."

The smile that was on her face was more than a smile; and yet it was not laughter. She dropped her hand from the boy's arm and passed her fingers between his, and she took his hand as two children might when they walk hand in hand down some dark passage at night, when, fearing to be alone, they feel protection by the presence of one another.

"Dear Jessie," said Maxwell, "do not look so, do sit down."

"I cannot sit down," said Jessie; "there, do not you hear Leonard calls me, and he said that he would call me

the moment that he came. I want to take him to my room, because, you know, I would not have him see me here without the jessamine in my hair, for he always said I must wear the jessamine. Why do you not come?"

"What shall we do?" said Maxwell.

"I do not know what she means," said Cicely.

Mr. Seymour's footstep approached the door. He had learned from one or two who passed through the ante-room that Jessy had heard all. Occupied in trying to console and advise those in such deep sorrow, Mr. Seymour had for a moment forgotten where his child might be. But now, on hearing that she had received the fatal intelligence, in an instant every other consideration was paled in his fond heart.

"Jessy! Jessy! Where is my child?" said the kind old man.

"Papa," said Jessy, leading Maxwell up to him, "Dear papa, he is come; do not you know him?" said she turning round to the boy, "do not you know him? Here is Leonard; he does not look quite as he did, does he? I have been looking at him for so many minutes and I cannot quite understand it, but you know it is Leonard," and she fixed her eye again on Maxwell, and then on Mr. Seymour, then on Cicely, then on the great wax candles, and on the portraits on the wall, and again on Mr. Seymour, and then once more on Maxwell, and there she rested her vacant inquiring gaze for some minutes. No one dared to stir the deep stillness of that moment which seemed already to have told deep-down to more hearts than one the tale of a sad future.

It was difficult to know what to do. The little group which were gathered round Jessy, absorbed as they were in their own sorrow, became now engrossed in her condition. Each saw and felt, though no one expressed their conviction, that that one sentence had done a work which might affect the passage of coming years. A tale seemed wound up, a drama of which each had been an unconscious spectator seemed to be drawing to its last act, and that one of sombre melancholy. As yet, no one else had joined the circle. But in the deep silence of those few perplexed moments, the slight distant movements and sounds heard from other parts of the house, told that there were other sufferers by the ill tidings, and that the shafts of the war were finding their way home to many a wounded heart and stricken life.

Maxwell stood in the middle of the room. There was a mixture of sincere sympathy and manliness about him, which even in that moment did not escape Cicely's observation. Jessy's hand lay on his arm ; it appeared not to lie upon him with the soft gentle touch which was ever hers. But the moment he attempted to move, the touch became firmer ; so firm, that movement was clearly impossible. Her eye was steadily fixed on his face ; there was something in it, inquiring and anxious, still it was vacant : it was hard to say whether it did look at him, or at vacancy. The branch of jessamine had become disentangled from her hair, and had fallen on her shoulders. Her white dress shone in colourless brightness under the shower of warm light, shed by the wax candles which beamed from the walls.

Mr. Seymour was perplexed, and was afraid to

convince himself of his own impressions, or stereotype into settled form the confused ideas which floated past him, by urging Jessy to come. His last speech had made each one feel unwilling to speak again. It had been as the distant murmur of a storm very far away among faint hills on a quiet windless summer evening; still it spoke of something coming. Cicely whispered in Mr. Seymour's ear, and he left the room. Jessy glanced quickly at him, and drew her hand closer round Maxwell's arm, as if she feared that he too was going, and she should lose the longed for object of months. The door opened and Mrs. Thorburn entered.

"My dear Miss Seymour," said she, going up to her, "Mr. Seymour has asked me to take you to the carriage, it is waiting for you at the door, and he wishes to get home. I will come and see you to-morrow at the rectory." So saying, she approached Jessy, and laid her hand upon her arm. Jessy turned and smiled.

"You see he has come. It is as you said, joy was coming and we did not know it—cometh in the morning," said she, sweetly smiling, and then as if the sight of Mrs. Thorburn had brought with it a religious impression, and had robed the thoughts of Jessy's mind with Scriptural words; for when the mind is under some deep impressions, it takes the wings of its flight from any thing which passes by; she turned to Maxwell and said with a calm unvarying emphasis, "where thou goest, I will go; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried." The last words were said with increasing firmness and earnestness, and as she spoke them she gazed fixedly on Maxwell's face, as if *there*

were the object to which she had applied the words of the Moabitish widow.

"Dear Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Thorburn, "come with me ; your father is waiting for you, do come."

"You told me," said Jessy, "how it would all be ; those happy talks ! what a happy end they have brought. I am coming, come, Leonard, we will go together."

Maxwell tried to extricate his arm from her hand, and to withdraw himself quietly from her clinging hold. But it was hopeless.

"We will go together, we will not part again," said she.

Mrs. Thorburn made a sign to Maxwell, and he moved towards the door with Jessy on his arm. At the door they met Mrs. Mulso, who had been bustling about in all directions to soothe and comfort Mrs. Lorraine, and to interest herself in all that was going on in the crisis ; for her tender heart found a point of contact with all troubles, and her busy mind made her take a singular satisfaction in being in every scene where some confusion and perplexity were going on.

"Jessy, where is my pretty Jessy ?" said the old lady, coming in, and going up to her to kiss her ; she seemed inclined to draw her away from Cicely, Maxwell, Mrs. Thorburn, none of whom she at all liked to occupy the prominent position with her niece which they did. But Jessy was no more willing to yield her place by Maxwell's side to Mrs. Mulso, than she had been to Mrs. Thorburn. She kissed her kind old aunt, and then looked as if she expected to have way made for them to go out.

"Come with me, you cannot go to-night, you must stay here, my Jessy," said the old lady.

"Let us go," said Jessy, "papa is waiting, and Leonard is tired. He has come far to-day, and all to see me. Let us go."

"Leonard," said the old lady, by no means able to take in the delicacy of the moment, or to notice the touch or signs made by Cicely and Mrs. Thorburn.

"Leonard! my pretty one, he is not here—I thought —" said Mrs. Mulso looking up suddenly at Cicely, as if she were going to say, "I thought she had heard of it;" but she paused. But the delay was too long for Jessy's patience, and in the momentary perplexity of the party she had led Maxwell through the door to the hall. Mr. Loraine met them with his kind and considerate manner, having for the moment tried to suppress his own grief to consider Jessy's.

"Miss Seymour," said he, "let me take you to the carriage, and go home with you. I am sure you well know the way in which we all feel you are one of us, and your trouble is our trouble."

"You must not keep him now," said she, "he shall come back to you to-morrow, but he must be with me this evening; to-morrow we will come together—to-morrow—to-morrow." She drew towards the carriage, there was nothing for it, and Maxwell got in with her and sat beside her. Few words were spoken in that journey; all which were by Jessy.

"Papa, we shall go and see them all at the hall to-morrow, but not to-night, they wanted Leonard to-night; that was not fair, was it?"

They reached the rectory, and in deep silence Mr. Seymour descended the steps, scarcely knowing how to treat the difficult case before him, though all through the journey home he had been lifting up his heart to God to beg guidance and direction.

But Jessy solved the difficulty by immediately leading Maxwell towards her little room. "We will come there together now, and I will show you all the books I have read, and the new things I bought, when I heard you were coming; and all your letters, and——" and Jessy smiled so sweetly, yet so vacantly at Maxwell, that he scarcely knew how any longer to bear his painful position.

"You will come," said she, and led him down the passage which led to her room.

Mr. Seymour followed, the servants stared surprised at the peculiarity of the scene.

She brought him to her room. It was dark except for the small lamp which shone with faint lustre round the furniture and the walls; she sat down in her own chair and drawing one close to her, she led Maxwell to it, still keeping her hand in his. Mr. Seymour sat down on her other side waiting for some circumstance to offer a solution to the difficulty. There was a silence for awhile. But Jessy took the initiative. She still kept her eye on Maxwell.

"Take off this jessamine," said she, "To think your hand should do it!"

Maxwell took the slender bough and laid it on the table. She looked round the room until her eye rested on the piano.

"And now I will sing to you one of my own songs which I have so often sung since you were gone."

She led Maxwell to a chair opposite her by the side of the piano, and sitting down herself, she passed her fingers quickly and lightly over the notes. The music she struck out thrilled Maxwell's heart with its touching loveliness. Her hair had fallen back ungirt of the jessamine bough over her neck; she stopped a moment as if to collect some scattered thoughts, and then began.

As she sung she kept her eye unvaryingly fixed on Maxwell, and the sweet pathos of her voice as it expressed the touching woes of her own frail spirit, made so far more sad by their utter unreality, now went nigh to break the poor boy's power of self-command down. But at the last stanza she looked away for a minute as if some wandering phantom had caught and drawn off her too vacant attention. Mr. Seymour seized the moment and made a sign to Maxwell, and he slid from the room. Jessy looked round, but her eye rested on a vacant chair; her hands dropped from her piano, and her voice ceased. She rose slowly, and binding up her hair she moved towards the door.

"My pretty Jessy," said her father, no longer able to keep up, "where are you going? stay with your poor old father; there's nothing he will not do for you."

"Come," said she, "come and look for *him*. He has gone." Mr. Seymour took her hand and led her out. He led her towards her own bed-room, having first beckoned the old housekeeper to follow who had been

hovering round the hall with the other servants, seeing clearly enough that something sad was the matter.

"Come and look for *him*," were the only words she said, and went on saying as they led her to her room. Having reached it they closed and fastened the door. It was long, very long before they could persuade her to rest; but by dint of much entreaty, and assuring her that they would aid in the search of Leonard at day-break the next day, they at last prevailed on her to go to rest.

Mr. Seymour determined not to leave her. He said he would sit up in her room and watch by her, and if he needed help would call the housekeeper.

Jessy sunk into slumber, and all was still. The good man sat watching by her side on a couch. The Bible lay open before him, and the tale of Joseph sending for his father Jacob was before his eyes. Overcome with anxiety and watching, he fell asleep. He woke, suddenly startled by some sound, but he saw nothing; the lamp burnt where he had left it. His eye turned to the bed, but it was empty. Jessy was gone. Mr. Seymour started up and rung the bell. The door stood open, and he went hastily out. He went down the passage towards Jessy's room: he thought she might be there. He entered the room, the door and the window were both open; the church tower stood up calm and grey in the night light; the window opened down to the ground on to a terrace, which led round the garden. He looked out, and fancied he saw a light in the churchyard, flickering and passing among the graves. Filled with alarm, he was

hurrying out, when he noticed that some of the furniture had been deranged since last night, and the music had been altered. He walked quickly across the lawn; the air was deeply still; and the chill February night hung cold and silent round the church tower. He plunged into the narrow pathway, surrounded by the evergreens, which led up to the churchyard gate.

The light again flickered among the distant graves. He hurried on. A figure dressed in white was passing from grave to grave in rapid movement, and stooping as if to find something among them. Mr. Seymour feared to startle her, and yet to leave her in that employment another moment would be indeed impossible. He came quietly up. There was Jessy dressed in her white night gear, her long hair streaming over her shoulders; her feet bare upon the cold dewy grass, and the small lamp in her hand. As Mr. Seymour came up she was in the act of stooping over a grave newly made; it was Mrs. Ward's, who had been by her own wish buried in that churchyard.

Jessy's manner was quiet and unexcited. "My Jessy," said the old man. She turned quickly round, "Come and look for him," said she,—"he has gone again, and I have been looking for him so long. They say he is among the graves, and this was the last which I saw into; I think he is here, I think he is here. There are a great many here down here among the graves; and I think, but I do not know, I think he must be here too. Come and look for him."

"My child, my Jessy, my poor lost child. He is not here, Leonard is not here, do, do come back with me.

Your bare feet on this cold grass, and nothing on but this thin dress. Oh, Jessy, my child, my child, what is the matter?"

"Do not cry, papa," said Jessy, going up to him and laying her hand on his arm; "do not cry, there is nothing the matter, only I want to find him. He will be back presently, do not cry for him. He will come to me, only I can't find him: come and look for him." She turned and followed Mr. Seymour. He led the way towards the churchyard gate. But as she came near the door she stopped. "In here," she said, and before he could stop her, she had gone up the aisle, and with her bare feet upon the cold floor, had approached the altar. She turned to her father and said, "Come and look for him, dear papa; come and ask God for him, He will show us where to find him. Alice Thorburn always said, 'Seek and ye shall find, God is our refuge,—our *background*. If all other things fail, come and pray.'" She knelt, and he knelt by her side. He prayed a few brief words of earnest intercession, and then gently drew her arm in his.

"We will go now and see," said she, sighing, "perhaps he has gone to my room, and is waiting for me. We have done the right thing, dear papa. We have gone to God, and He never fails those who seek Him."

"No, never, my own child," said the old man, his voice choking with tears; as he rather bore than led the poor girl along the wet grass towards her window, cheering herself as she went with the words, "he is waiting for me in my room."

She passed from the room to her bedroom, but he

was not there. It was long ere again she slept, and long and weary are the hours which hang over the unhappy, sad the long watches of the unpoised mind, but with this poor sorrower, there ever was a star of hope shining before her;—one star in a very dark dull night; one single star on which she ever kept her eye, and that was the impression that he had come back, and was somewhere near, and that she would find him at last, and in that pursuit she never tired. It was ever the burden of her conversation to each person she met, “Come and find *him*.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

MISS BAXTER.

THE sad news of Leonard's untimely death and its crushing effect on Jessy Seymour, who was universally beloved by those who knew her, rapidly spread through the neighbourhood, and excited much interest and deep sympathy and compassion. Mr. Seymour, whose character was eminently respected, drew out the largest amount of sincere interest from every one. Though no one as yet liked to intrude on the solemn stillness which ever pervades the house of mourning,—other means were resorted to to discover the state of matters, and Mrs. Mulso's house was a great point for information to many. Her near relationship to Jessy as well as her attachment to her, and Mrs. Thorburn's known friend-

ship for the unfortunate girl made that household the one above all others to be the resort of kind and interested inquirers.

Poor Mrs. Mulso was only too glad to give all the information in her power. It pleased her love of sarcasm on those whom she thought were causes of the evil, and gave a vent to her distressed mind. Sorrow for others takes many different forms. Perhaps it is true that the more reserved it is, the more real; nevertheless there are cases where much real kind-heartedness and sympathy are still existing though the tongue may too freely express it. There are some whose feelings lie very much in their expression of it, and without that power of expressing it, it would very much cease to exist. The word, the tone of voice, the pathetic account, sometimes not only express, but embody the feeling, and without them the heart would be to a certain extent, barren and cold. It is wonderful how words and manner kindle and increase the feelings of the heart: wide and fierce flames sometimes burst out of small embers, nevertheless the flame by its very vigour spreads the area of the fuel which emits it. Such was Mrs. Mulso. Really kind-hearted and full of sympathy, yet there were some who doubted whether if she could not get her opportunity of expressing and giving vent to it she would have had much left to conceal in her silent and hidden heart. Her delight was to gather round her her own little coterie in her room and utter forth her complaints, or to inflict some wound through the shaft of sarcasm at breakfast, of which Mrs. Thorburn was generally the object; and if on these occasions she

succeeded in gaining an attentive audience or distressing her niece, she seemed like one who had gained her point, and was satisfied to spend the rest of her energy in binding up the wounds she had created, or in dissipating the exaggerations which she was conscious of having given utterance to.

Jessy's condition was a prolific theme; as yet she had not seen her. Indeed no one had, except Mrs. Thorburn; and this circumstance by no means quenched Mrs. Mulso's flame of jealousy and indignation.

A Miss Baxter was staying just now with Mrs. Mulso. She was a friend of Mrs. Thorburn, and had come for a few days, partly induced by sincere sympathy with what she had heard of Jessy Seymour. She knew her well, and had taken a deep interest in her, and though very unlike her in disposition and circumstances, nevertheless had longed to cultivate more and more the acquaintance.

Miss Baxter was the daughter of a gentleman whom reverses had brought down to a condition of poverty in the neighbourhood where once he had moved in considerable influence and power. He was now dead, and had left his daughter dependent on very small means; she had taken up her temporary residence with her brother, who had a post of small remuneration at Lincoln. She had one misfortune which much hindered her chance of success in life. She was lame, owing to a fall which she had from the carelessness of a nurse, when she was a child; and the effect of this had crippled her walk, and hindered her in many schemes which she had formed for her own support. A naturally

sweet and patient disposition adorned and strengthened by religion had made her a most winning and attractive character to those who knew her intimately ; but her misfortunes, of which at first she had been too conscious, had made her retired in manner, and unwilling to live much in the society which her father's position might have given her a claim to. Mrs. Thorburn was her friend, and with her she had spent some of the happiest hours of her life.

Mrs. Mulso but half liked her, and considered her as but one of the set whose views and machinations, as she thought, had had the principal work in the sorrows which had fallen on the rectory. It was on a morning about a week after the events described in the last chapter, that Mrs. Mulso and her party were sitting at breakfast. A note from the rectory being placed in Mrs. Thorburn's hand from Mr. Seymour naturally led the thoughts to Jessy.

"There is no better news," said Mrs. Thorburn, folding up the note. "Miss Seymour remains in the same state she has been in from the first."

"My poor brother," said Mrs. Mulso, "how little *he* expected such a blow to him in his declining years ; so good, so excellent, so truly religious ! It is *so strange* that we cannot let well alone. His *admirable* religion I should have thought would have been sufficient to have led his daughter to heaven. But however, the way there is unpaved now ; the Fifth Commandment is turned upside down. It is no longer 'Honour your father and mother,' but despise them, and then all is right. I remember so well my mother used to say that

she believed the day was coming when children would consign their parents to a madhouse, under the charge of insanity, because they would not any longer brook old fashioned truth." Mrs. Mulso paused to see the effect of her remarks. Miss Baxter felt awkward, for she knew well enough that all was directed at Mrs. Thorburn; she felt distressed, accustomed as she was to Mrs. Mulso's manner. But Mrs. Thorburn had taken up her crochet work, and seemed prepared calmly to abide the storm, come what would, for she knew that much of Jessy's calamity would be laid at her door.

"Surely no one thinks," said Miss Baxter, "that such a course can be blessed or be happy."

"No, *indeed*," said the old lady, who was waiting to catch fire at every point, "no, you see the effect on that poor unfortunate wreck—that lovely column shattered and broken down. Oh, what a noble mind was there o'erthrown! why could she not have been left alone with her kind old father? It's just the same story over again. I remember years ago, they drove poor Cowper the poet mad with some of their new-fangled doctrines, and one Mr. Newton sent half his parish into the County Lunatic Asylum by hammering Calvinism into them. But Calvinism grew out of fashion. It was too unintellectual for the increased refinement of the day."

"I do not quite see how any peculiar views on religion have effected this sad work on Miss Seymour," said Mrs. Thorburn quietly, seeing that her silence only increased the difficulty, and made the flame burn wider and wider. "Jessy Seymour has had her own sorrows and her own anxieties, but I do not see how there has

been much opportunity for any peculiar line of views to affect her; she has been far too simple-minded to allow of any peculiar doctrines to affect her spirit. Hers has been a very real condition of mind. She has simply been craving for the knowledge that she was doing her duty. She wanted nothing more."

"Doing her duty," said the irritated old lady, "why has she *not* been doing her duty? I should like to know who would say that my Jessy has *not* done her duty? The most blameless and lovely character!"

"Quite so," said Mrs. Thorburn, "but nevertheless, she has had anxious thoughts and questions about herself, which she has long been craving to get answered."

"And which," interrupted Mrs. Mulso, "have been confirmed in her by her *injudicious* friends. Save me from my friends," said the old lady, turning round and smiling at Miss Baxter.

"The events of this sad war," said Mrs. Thorburn, "have had perhaps as much to do with all the sad break up in Jessy's spirit, as any other cause. War is indeed a calamity!" This view of the case by no means improved matters in Mrs. Mulso's mind. It only opened out a new subject of annoyance.

"The war, yes the war; and now the fashion is to think that war is a holy and righteous thing. It has come like a judgment on the Loraines, and Miss Loraine in chief. Why only imagine the other evening, Mr. Loraine and she were hoping their son might not return. It is the fashion now to see a high intellectual view in every thing, and to think war is better than peace, and vice

than virtue. Some of the clergy are preaching up the glories of war; and who on earth would not be sick of the way in which the nurses are talked of? There is a philosophy now in everything, nothing is commonplace. Your very nurses are turned into heroines, and your clerks and beadles are dubbed sub-deacons. It is all of one die and cast. Well, well, my poor Jessie is but the victim of a combination of principles,—military and religious; why a man can't write a poem now, but that he is to be classed under some *school*, and he can't paint a picture, but more is thought of his *style* than of his subject, and religion must be discovered in his pinks and blues."

So saying, Mrs. Mulso left the room in no small state of excitement.

"How is Jessie?" said Miss Baxter to Mrs. Thorburn when Mrs. Mulso was gone.

"I fear very ill," said Mrs. Thorburn, shaking her head, "very ill, the accounts do not get any better; I was there yesterday, and sat with her in her room, but it was of no use. I thought my presence might fix her wandering attention, but it simply gave a religious turn to her wandering fancy, and she met me as I entered with her eye fixed on me with such a painful mixture of vacancy and sorrow, that I could hardly bear to look at her. She only said as I came in, 'Come and help me find him,' and then something about the 'beasts of the field by day, and the birds of the air by night,' and she gazed out at the window, and then rose and led me towards it. I had some difficulty in making her sit down again."

"Poor Jessy!" said Miss Baxter, "did you expect such an end?"

"No, indeed, but I always noticed a singular sensitiveness and overwrought feeling amounting to morbidity, but that was all; I thought, nay, I am sure she was checking it, but this sore chastisement has quite broken her down."

"I often have heard people talk of 'Jessy,'" said Miss Baxter, "as if they did not like her, and thought her weak and tiresome, and say that they could not understand her; and I often heard strong comparisons drawn between her and Cicely to Cicely's advantage. But I never have liked it. I always did love Jessy Seymour so much."

"Nothing can be more foolish than these comparisons," said her companion; "every one has their own disposition and their own difficulties, and none can judge of another except 'He Who knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are but dust.'" Jessy Seymour's is a most interesting character. She allows her eye to turn too much inwards, and to search too continually the inward parts of her heart. She has not enough looked outwardly to God's law and attributes; but she was beginning to try and do so when it pleased Him to give her this great sorrow. His ways are indeed mysterious. Cicely Loraine is a totally different character. She could not understand Jessy, nor could those who thoroughly liked and appreciated the one thoroughly like the other. Miss Loraine's is a beautiful character, and will no doubt do a real work of good with all with whom she comes in contact; but

her temptations are different : she does right without thinking about it, and without knowing it, while Jessy is too conscious of all she does."

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Baxter, "Cicely Loraine is a noble creature. Imagine what I heard the other day; two girls, two Miss Huttons, who live close by our house, and whose circumstances are very reduced, had been continually supplied by means and aid through a friend of theirs, who transmitted this help as from an unknown friend. The strictest secrecy was enjoined, and at last they discovered by accident that it all came from Miss Loraine, who had met them at a friend's house, and had heard their circumstances, and had supplied them continually with this aid under promise of strict secrecy."

"It is just like her," said Mrs. Thorburn, "just like her: she is always doing kind acts which no one knows of; I have constantly traced her work and her instrumentality where I have least guessed it. She is a noble character!"

"I did not quite know what you meant just now, when you said that Cicely Loraine was never conscious of doing right, and Jessy too much so: that seems strange," said Miss Baxter.

"What I mean is," said Mrs. Thorburn, "that people very often are not conscious of their own conduct. They do right without knowing it. Right and virtue stand externally to themselves as graces and beautiful points separate from their own minds, and they do right instinctively. While with others right is a matter gained and reached after a long and fearful struggle."

"Then, Mrs. Thorburn, is virtue only a thing dependant on our reaching some equilibrium of our own struggles and powers? Surely it is a thing in itself which cannot be left to depend on the mere striking of a balance."

"I never meant to say it was so in itself; far from it. All I meant was, that to many persons it does to them consist in reaching a mean between two extremes. There is no doubt an awful struggle in many when the disposition pulls one way, and the law of God another; and inasmuch as the law of God does not profess to apply to each separate individual case of human action, so as exactly to tell each man how to act in each particular condition of life, it is the work of the Blessed SPIRIT to give such persons the means and power of discernment as to what is right in their case; and when the general rule with regard to any one goodness touches and affects him. This is what it means, when it speaks of the Spirit 'teaching us,' and 'guiding us into all truth.' This is the opportunity of His work. If goodness standing external to us could assume that clear definite shape which some think it always must and does, then there would be no probation, and we should all be perfect. It is the very fact of our having to reach and find duty that makes this state of probation. Holiness is won and finished in heaven; but here to each one of us it must be a matter of difficult attainment, as well as discernment."

"Then you mean that Jessy has had to go through this struggle?"

"I do; it has been painful to her. 'My soul is always in my hand, yet do I not forget Thy law,' is the Psalmist's cry when he is describing the equilibrium of the good man's life. There is a tendency in every character to do one or the other of these things too exclusively; and true religion consists in the equilibrium—in the habit of studying and looking internally into self as well as looking externally upon God and His law and attributes."

"Did you ever read 'the Fairy Bower?' what you say reminds me a good deal of some things in that."

"Yes, I have, I do not quite like it. I cannot say how highly I admire Cicely Loraine. I think if all the world were to be full of one or the other, there is no doubt it should be full of Cicelys, to do real good; but there are many Jessys, and we must not despise them because they do not happen exactly to fall in with our particular fancy. But here comes Miss Loraine."

The servant opened the door, and announced Miss Loraine.

"O, Mrs. Thorburn," said Cicely, "I am so glad to find you in. Have you heard how Jessy is? I am so sorry to find she is so very ill. Is there anything which I can do for her? I wish if there is anything you would tell me, for I do long to be of use."

"I saw Jessy, yesterday," said Mrs. Thorburn, "and saw no change for the good. I do not know of any way in which you could do anything, Miss Loraine; it is very kind of you to offer it, and I well know how

Jessy would appreciate it, but I do not know what to suggest."

Cicely was silent for a few moments. "I came," said she, "because I wished to see Jessy before I went. But if you think it is not advisable I will not press it."

"Are you going for any time, Miss Loraine?" said Mrs. Thorburn.

"Oh," said Cicely, "I am going away—yes—for some little time. I am going to Scutari."

"To Scutari?" said both the ladies in surprise.

"Yes," said Cicely, "I have got my father and mother to let me go. I have long been wishing it. There are circumstances connected with Leonard's fate which make it very important I should go, and I start on Monday. I am going with some other ladies, who are to join Miss Nightingale's company; and I hope to find Mrs. Allen there. I should have liked very much to have seen Jessy before I went, but if it will do her harm, I would by no means press it."

There was a minute's silence. Mrs. Thorburn broke it. "Miss Loraine," said she, "I envy you; I wish it were my vocation to go with you; you have chosen a noble line, and one which well befits your character and powers."

"Oh pray don't praise me," said Cicely, "or I shall not go. I am only going to try and be useful; I cannot bear to think of so much sorrow and trouble, and not to take part in it. I long to go: and Leonard's end has given a new stimulus to it." Her voice slightly trembled as she spoke. Cicely Loraine seldom shed a tear: but she did at that moment. She had

great self-command, but she had no deficiency in real and genuine feeling.

"What course do you purpose pursuing?" said Mrs. Thorburn.

"I hope to find good Mrs. Allen," said Cicely, "and she will be a friend and guide to me in a strange land. But I may not stay; mamma is far from well, and I must spend all the time I can with her. I shall see you before I go, Mrs. Thorburn." So saying, Cicely left the room.

"She is a noble character," said Mrs. Thorburn, "I seldom saw a more thoroughly truthful one; seldom or never. She is so entirely unselfish, and so quietly reserved that she hardly ever expresses her opinions or her thoughts; and as to what she suffers, it may be marked on her heart after she is dead, but I am sure no other record will be left of it."

"How happy," said Miss Baxter, "to be able to go out and do something for those in suffering. I so long to do it. It is so sad to hear of so much anguish and not to be able to take any part in it. I am always longing to be at the seat of trouble."

"We all have our work in this great war," said Mrs. Thorburn, "and if yours and mine be at home, it is the LORD, 'let Him do what seemeth Him good.' We must take the road to heaven, which He has laid over the mountains; we may not lay our own. He chooses highlands when we should prefer low; and He makes rough ways when we should choose smooth. Depend on this, Miss Baxter, every great event of life, war or peace, be it what it may, receives its real character at the day of

judgment; and those concerned in them receive their character at the same time. We must wait for the end to decide everything; nothing is really complete till the end. *Then* many a quiet path will have led to a glorious and noble end, and many a noble path will lead out to a poor and unlovely conclusion. We must wait for the end to settle everything. We are often inclined to name Benoni, Benjamin, when God after all intends to make that which we have called 'the child of our right hand,' 'the child of our sorrow;' and the contrary. It is the end which determines the matter; then many a one on whose cradle we have written, Benjamin, will on his tomb have sculptured, Benoni. Many of those plans and schemes which we form for ourselves and which we deem so happy will then be pronounced the cause of our sorrow, while many a scheme which we count our greatest trouble will then be declared our brightest and most glorious blessing. The home work, dear Miss Baxter, may prove in the end more really conducive to God's glory than the more splendid and glorious work of aiding in the energies and sharing in the sympathies of the war."

"But what do you think is home work for those in the war?" said Miss Baxter.

"Well," said Mrs. Thorburn, "much. First, surely we can pray for them, and there is much in that: the intercession of two or three. Then there are so many kind duties we can fulfil. The writing to them—hearing the recital of their troubles—consoling those whom they have left behind, and striving to realise by our efforts that we are their comrades in peril,

danger, and sickness ; all these are opportunities of aiding them while we are at home, and there is no saying how many opportunities will spring up around us if we look out for them, and are prayerfully and patiently doing so."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Thorburn," said Miss Baxter ; "I so deeply feel all you say, and I know so well that if I can but learn patiently and quietly to take the road God has given me, He will open paths for me to walk in. It was 'the lame, the maimed, and the blind' which most of all brought out the love and power of JESUS CHRIST to the admiration and worship of the world."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WIDOW.

THE temporary hospitals were the least commodious of all places of the kind. Neglect and ill-usage too much marked the condition of the private soldier ; and yet no one was to blame. The absence of many things conducive to health and recovery marked the state of the officers. The scene of war can provide and show but few comforts, nevertheless there might be arrangements made which would secure against the real anguish which is endured by many there. Among the early sufferers in the hospital erected temporarily and quickly for the dead and dying was young Allen, who had been wounded at Balaklava as well as at Alma. His gallant bearing had

been noticed by those in authority, and his name had appeared among those who were sent home recommended to especial favour. It is difficult to say how much the consciousness of having gained the approval of those over us, and the gratitude of our country soothes the pillow of suffering to those engaged in the scenes of war. Through the long feverish nights the mind of Allen was soothed by the recollection of the pleasure which his conduct would give to those at home. Little did he know that his mother was at that moment on her way to the sick bed of her beloved and only child. Few bonds had ever been closer and dearer than that which existed between the widow and her son. It was that of the tenderest attachment; yet no eye had witnessed the moment when their feelings had had their full expression, and none was nigh when the mother showed how she was devoted to her child. She was reserved because she had little to say, and he was reserved because he preferred keeping unexpressed the feelings which moved and stirred within him. But they understood each other. I do not mean that there were not times when the son did not fancy that his mother did not share in his thoughts in the deeper views and more stirring interests of life, or when she did not yearn to have a more tender expression of his love from her child.

There is no occasion in life in which we are more entirely ourselves than in the hour of sickness, and that especially when separated from those we love, and from scenes around which hang the associations of home. There is an excitement about the stir of active

life which is sufficient to pale the lustre of the most intense glow of earthly affections, and to outsound the melody of the dearest voices which have accompanied our early days. The most affectionate father, husband, or brother may after a while find the keenness of the anguish of the parting hour to a great degree blunted by the ambition or the emulation of the active path of life. But, when we are laid low on the bed of sickness and far away from home, all the past returns to us in the melting colours of a dream, and voices we have almost forgotten roll back again with the sweetness and the power of long past days. The hour of sickness is above all the season in which the soul returns to Him that made it, and in which in the deep communings of the silent moment we are able to remember our connection with the Eternal. It was upon the bed of sickness that the king of Judah learnt "to walk softly" through the remainder of his days, having learnt the infirmity of his own heart and the wonderful forbearance of his Maker: it was from the couch of sickness, strewn by the wayside of the village of Galilee or the town of Judæa, that the paralytic, the lame, and the blind heard the voice of JESUS, and hearing His voice were won towards Him by the consciousness that He alone afforded rest to the wearied life. It has been on the bed of sickness that many of those who have marched along the highway of life following the trumpet call of ambition or of avarice, monarchs who descending from their thrones have traversed the military pathways of a continent, and men of genius who have issued from their home to traverse distant realms in the pursuit of the

subject matter of their science, it has been in the season of sickness that such men have been brought to a recognition of those realities which they never would have fully grasped in the pursuit of their respective callings.

And so it has been with ourselves. We have, as the prodigal when in the field gazing on the swine that devoured the envied husks, come to ourselves; and recollecting the Father whom we had left, the heritage which we had discredited, and the blessed possession which though so long forsaken is still our own, we have to thank God for the hour of sickness, and above all for that long one which usually precedes the first meeting with Him. What would many of us do if, summoned suddenly from the active scenes of life, we were compelled to undergo the scrutiny of the judgment without having had time to consider fully the depth of our sinful motives, or to call upon God reconciled to us in CHRIST for pardon? The long hours of consumption, and those diseases which so peculiarly like the sickle of the harvest lay low the youth and energies of our own northern clime, are after all the most merciful messengers of a long-suffering God, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Him."

While these thoughts belong to every home and individual amongst us, they have their own peculiar power in connection with the field of battle and the campaign of war. There perhaps the excitement and stir of the moment deadens the power of old associations, and almost forgotten voices. There, as in a new world, governed by new laws and conventional ideas, the young

v soldier is placed as it were across a vast chasm that yawns between himself and home ; and in the midst of the brilliant fires of emulation and ambition, the noise of battle, the clamour, the excitement, the gratulation of friends or the approval of superiors, is tempted to forget the prayers of home, and those kindlier links of the chain of discipline which bound his soul to God. How many of us have reason to know the deep regret which we feel when on reading the list of the killed on the field of battle, the eye rests on any name which recalls to the mind the too great and thoughtless gaiety of the youth who left our shores the other day, giddy with the intoxication of boyhood ! How much we long, even though we ourselves may not be there to tend the sinking hour, that there might be a pause between the bolt of the battle and the actual summons into eternity ! How dreadful the idea of the spirit ascending at once to its Maker from the very field of strife !

Those thoughts cling to the hospital and make its ward connected with the military campaign a scene of the most touching and beautiful interest. It is these thoughts that gather around the character and the conduct of such an one as Miss Nightingale or those who have gone forth upon their mission of mercy.

Thoughts like these belong indeed in a great degree to every hospital in London, or any other city of our land ; but if to one more than another they cling to the walls of the hospitals of the Crimea and Scutari. There while the patient lingers in expectation of his summons to eternity, we at least at home are able

to lift up holy hands in earnest intercession to the Lord of the vineyard that He will spare the barren tree one year more. There at least we may hope that voices speaking of objects, which belong to the past days of life, may recall to the mind of the dying his Father's home, and love. God forbid that any at home should forget to use all those appliances which the covenant in which we are with God has placed in our power, by which we may affect the souls of those who belong to us while yet they linger upon the verge and borderland of the unseen world. It is on such occasions that the harvest of youthful association is reaped and gathered into the garners. It is then that the seed sown by no random hand by the careful and religious parent, which has sprung up in hitherto too weakly a crop, finds its fulness in the laden shock and ear, and in the moment of dying is gathered in as an abundant harvest, more than answering the expectations of the too hesitating sower, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days."

While these thoughts belonged to all those scenes of which we have read such touching accounts, they belonged with great force to Allen, whose wound in the cavalry charge at Balaklava had confined him to the lingering dulness of the hospital, and the bed which, while it detained him from the interest of the strife going on outside, compelled him to reflections which to the young and energetic are ever at first distasteful and sad.

Allen was one who, as we have seen, was reserved

and silent and had the power of suppressing those deeper feelings which every now and then broke through the external superficialities of his nature. Nevertheless his affection was very real towards his mother; and though possessing an intellect more vigorous than her's, and a view of life of wider grasp than her more limited experience was able to take; he nevertheless had retained through life, a devotion and affection for her which is rarely equalled. There are such characters, though they are few. Too often the more vigorous mind leads to a contempt for the less vigorous, and the wider range and limits of the mental sight leads us to undervalue the properties of those who, while they are narrowed in their view, are sincere and real in their intentions. Happy is he who is able like Allen, to lean with the force of an affectionate character on what was so true in the conduct and the tone of his mother's mind! With these feelings it is not surprising that till the moment of his going out to the war, Allen should have reposed on his mother with the most confiding and unbroken affection.

Left a widow while he was yet a boy, with a pittance so scanty as hardly to supply the necessities of life, yet using hourly self-denial unostentatiously and without seeking the praise or approbation of her fellow, a condition which perhaps woman chiefly knows, and then when it is exercised for the husband or the child, Mrs. Childers had from her child's earliest years inspired him with the impression that whatever storms and troubles were blowing around his life, there was a certain refuge in her. And when childhood developed into youth, and

the reflecting mind of Allen was able to understand more truly and thoroughly the motives of her actions, and to read the heart beneath the patient eye which gazed down upon her hourly work as she mended Allen's clothes, singing some tune of other days to amuse him during his hours of recreation, he was able to value and to respect that self-denial which alone could be the result of affection and sincerity of principle.

For many years she retained a lodging in the town of Lincoln, during which time the best part of her means were expended in giving Allen that education which she deemed to be due to his father's position in society, and the hope of his future success in life. However close the pinch was to enable her boy thus to prepare for his entrance on the great career of the future, she never either complained or shrunk from the effort, from the feeling that she was fulfilling a duty to God, to the husband whom she had so loved, and to that child in whose future she would find her own.

At the period of the opening of my tale Allen had completed his course of study at the school at which his mother had placed him, and had reached that age at which those that hope for a commission begin to feel that every month is important. Allen had interest as we have seen already ; but it pleased God to add another blow to the many that had already stricken the widow's heart, and the small sum, on the interest of which she had been so long living, which had been left her by her husband, and been placed in the hands of a banker in the town, was lost by the failure of the bank, and she returned one morning from the town

with the feeling which in any ordinary person would have taken the form of simple despair ; though her mind took it rather as an additional reason to cast all upon Him Who never forsook the fatherless or the widow. She had nothing left in the world, and was now driven out in her slender vessel to buffet with the storms of the midsea of life. A small pittance gathered from her own and her husband's relatives was the only sum on which she had to depend. This calamity hastened Allen's uncle in his efforts to get him his commission, and also necessitated the widow's leaving Lincoln to find a home in the village of Brandon. It was under these circumstances that the bitterness of her troubles came upon her ; her severance from Allen, and his departure to the scene of danger and of peril. Yet in every occasion of life her eye scarcely betrayed by a varied expression those deep emotions which were unconscious to her, and heaved nevertheless in her bosom. Those that gazed upon her quiet face, beneath the folds of her widow's cap, or her black bonnet, never, except by her sometimes being a little paler than at others, discovered any despondency at the trials of her lot in life. Life had to her but few charms ; its colour was gone—bleached out ; nevertheless it was not dull nor sad—an object not desired, but not regretted.

The first effect of the Crimean campaign upon Allen was to call forth the more powerful energies of his disposition along the paths of ambition and emulation, and to a certain degree to pale the force and power of home association. He was ambitious, and he felt con-

scious of inherent power. The future was before him ; his fortune lay in his own hand. He burnt to signalise himself, and to break away from that chain of poverty the sound of whose links is often so grating to the ear of those who are compelled to listen to it, even upon the very verge of the grave. His motives were noble and high. He longed not only to achieve for himself and for the father who was gone an honour and a credit to their name, but he burnt to give his mother some return for her years of effort for his sake. But singularly in proportion as he consciously desired to work for her, and to return the debt that he owed her, that calm, reserved and respectful love which he had borne to her to a certain degree altered its character. It became slightly feverish, and, as the object that is borne upon the stream glides down almost imperceptibly, unruffled and unrent upon the bosom of the water, at last is hurried into an eddy where the waters are tempestuous, and becomes itself more strikingly an object to the eye, in proportion as it is in peril of being destroyed, so the affection which glided down the onward and even stream of life in Allen's case, became more conscious to himself and more in danger of injury when it was heaved to the surface of the stir and din of life and of strife.

Those few weeks in the Crimea in bringing out these points in his disposition to a certain degree also led him to neglect some of those habits of religion and daily devotion that his mother had so carefully inculcated in him. His was a character which had sown deep down in it a certain scattering of the seed of seep-

ticism. During the unturned undersoil of his life in youth, that seed had never found its way in the plant that sprung to the surface. When the soil became disturbed and the undergrowth was able to reach the surface, a slight scepticism became a prominent portion of Allen's character,—a faint inclination to find religious exercises irksome, and to hesitate about the real need of using and adopting them. And though in conversation with companions, he ever defended, if compelled to speak at all, the side of religion,—feeling that he was bound to do so by the habits of the past; yet every word that was uttered by the sceptical rankled in his heart, and every now and then called forth from him a sarcastic expression or a satirical look. All this was unknown to her, who, at home, made it her chief daily work to pray for him, and of course never was wont to show itself in the tone of the letters which he so sincerely wrote to her; indeed, if it had, it may be doubted whether the simplicity of her mind and her natural intellect would have noticed the expression, or have been able to trace it back to its source. What these feelings, so common to many a youth in Allen's position, might have led to had it not been for the check that he received by his wound there is no telling, but at least we have reason to thank God that many a one whom we love and care for is laid low suddenly, if not by the stroke of battle, by sudden disease at home, and thereby compelled to undergo that process which Allen underwent in the hospital.

Carried from the field of Balaklava covered with honourable wounds, and having already drawn forth the

admiration of those who saw him in that memorable charge as well as having deserved the credit and the good word of those who commanded him, Allen was laid with a large number of others, beneath the shelter of a temporary field hospital which had been erected for the more immediate relief of the sufferers on the field of battle. His wounds were of such a nature that the very movement in the ambulance waggon was painful to him, and the sweat broke out in heavy drops on his forehead as he was borne along in the carriage towards the hospital. Here for a short time the anguish of his own wounds made him forget everything that was going on around him ; but presently he became painfully conscious of the suffering of many that were brought in from the field of battle. His eye rested from time to time on some mutilated figure whose ghastly wounds, and livid countenance reminded him of the real awfulness of the approach of death and the nearness of eternity. Scenes were taking place which aggravated the sufferings of the wounded in a high and distressing manner.

It was a few nights after Allen had been placed in his bed, and as yet not permitted to move, owing to the fever which attended his wounds, that he lay awake thinking of his home, and recalling the impressions and the associations of his boyhood. His eye was fixed musingly upon a candle that burnt on the other side of the narrow room which formed the ward ; and as he lay listening to the moans of those around him, he was suddenly struck by hearing in the next bed to him the low murmur of one who was saying to himself a prayer,

whose accents brought back the recollections of home days. The youth by his manner showed that he was striving to make his peace with God on the very verge and threshold of Eternity. At his words Allen was recalled to the recollection of how many days he had neglected praying to God, and how, though he had been in scenes of such imminent peril, he had been less careful with regard to his long future than he had ever been in days of comparative safety at home. This reflection brought before his mind's eye, as a sweet vision, his mother's form; and to his ear, his mother's voice. He recollected the scenes of his early childhood in a way in which he had not consciously remembered them before; as if the height of his fever, which had brought on delirium a little while before, had given to his powers of memory an acuteness which enabled them to pierce deep down into that hidden cavern of feeling, which to the retrospective eye is generally shrouded in impenetrable shades and mists. He was able to see the forms and figures of forgotten years moving across the extremity of the hiding place. He fancied that he saw himself dressed as a little child first learning the Lord's Prayer. He recollected the chime of three bells of an old village church while he with a sash round his short-waisted white frock rode in front of some one in a grey great coat upon a large black horse to church; while he passed his mother in the field looking proudly at her in his early ride. He imagined that he saw himself by that same mother's form in a pew covered with green baize and brass nails along the top so high as almost to prevent him seeing the sounding board of the

pulpit; while during the long Litany and Communion Service, he, kneeling by his mother's side, pulled out black horse hairs from the crushed green cushion, or gazed after little brown moths that flew up from behind the hollow lining of the wall of the pew. He could remember the fervency with which his mother used to pray, and how he wondered whether she was seeing God and the angels, as with closed eyes she seemed abstracted in the prayer.

All these like pictures seen in the dim distance of a cavern came out before his mind on his feverish bed; and recalling him to his better self he found his hands almost involuntarily drawn together under the sheet, and his lips without volition on his part uttering the words of the prayers of his boyhood. And as his mind kept roving over the same scenes he fancied himself returning home by his mother's side, marvelling at the strange decencies of Sunday, and wondering how he ever could really love the restrictions and the discipline of the Holy Day.

Then came out the picture of the evening hour,—the fire blazing on the hearth—the two tall candles on the table,—the large quarto volume bound in brown polished leather, which contained strange Dutch pictures of Bible scenes with the outlines of the figures scarcely discernible, and the grotesque German language occupying half the page; in his eye sacred hieroglyphics of religion. And as each page turned over while he lay he recollected his mother's voice explaining picture after picture as he came to it. He started upon his pillow as if the candle which burnt so dimly on the table

opposite him painting on the wall the outlines of the figures and the beds which occupied the room also painted one of the very pictures of the book on which his memory's eye was gazing.

It was one in which upon a closed door the strong black shadow was cast of a figure of a servant standing girt waiting for his LORD's return, holding in his hand the lamp ; while at the other end of the room the drunkards and revellers lay slumbering beneath the festive board. He started, for he almost imagined that he heard the accents of his mother's voice, saying, "That is the servant watching for his LORD's return ; he does not know whether He will come at midnight, or at cock crowing, or in the morning, but whenever he does hear His footstep outside the door, he will open the door and go back with his LORD to heaven." Then Allen remembered when he used to think, as a little child, "I will sit and watch, and when the Master comes, I and dear mamma will go back with Him to heaven ;" and he then remembered throwing his arm round that neck and burying his face in her bosom as he used to beg her to say her prayers with him to ask God that he might go with her to heaven.

So powerful was the impression of that past association that Allen leant forward from his pillow and found himself uttering in a voice far above a whisper, the earnest prayer to God, that whenever he was called he might indeed be found ready. He was only brought to a consciousness of the reality of his waking dream, and of the way in which he had spoken above a whisper and given expression to the deep down feelings and

thoughts of his mind by the circumstance of the youth who lay in the next bed to him suddenly turning his head in the direction of Allen's bed and saying, in a faint voice scarcely above a whisper, yet evidently causing him a painful effort,

"Oh! do say those words again; I did not know that anybody here knew how to pray in words like those; they remind me of so much—so much; do tell me—tell me whether you think that if I have forgotten all I used to know of God when I was young He will receive me now. Do tell me, for that prayer that you said just now comes to me like the fresh words of those I can never see again."

The sad reality of the youth's words touched Allen, and turning round as he lay back upon the pillow, he tried to console and encourage the dying moments of the youth; and he did administer consolation.

Before another half-hour was past the spirit of the boy had met its Maker, but not before with words uttered by the sinking breath he had thanked Allen for the message of consolation he gave him. As he lay dead his countenance seemed to gaze with smiling gratitude upon the eye of Allen as if the spirit that had left it had given its commission at parting that the corpse which had been its frail tenement should fulfil its own debt of gratitude and thankfulness.

It was on the night just after the scene that I have described that Allen was startled from the reality of his happier thoughts by the sudden rising of a heavy gale. The wind burst and rolled over the hill on which the temporary hospital was built with such violence as to

shake, and almost to tear apart the planks of the building, and to make the wounded sufferers cry out at the agitation produced by the furniture in the room. Each moment the gale became louder and wilder, and the noise outside whenever it could be discerned betokened the agitation of men striving to retain their tents or their property, all alike hurried away on the terrible blast.

The records of that night have been given in full in the memorials of this illustrious campaign, affording alike matter for the humorist as for the sadder annalist of the sorrows and horrors of war. While here the tent blown down buried in the folds of its heavy ruins one man; in another place it excluded from home and shelter some one who already worn out with the fatigue of watching, or the exhaustion of recent fighting, too much needed the repose and shelter it had afforded him. There men running half dressed after articles of furniture, more precious than jewels in that land of the stranger, presented the most ridiculous ideas to the mind of those that looked on. Here against the low stone-wall a few articles of furniture had found a temporary stoppage, where men and beasts covered beneath the shelter, were anxious, if possible, to escape the buffet of the pitiless elements. In other places men were seen struggling against the folds of their canvass, which flapped backwards and forwards with great violence. In several instances the unfortunate occupants of their frail house, finding it impossible to keep out the drenching rain which came with the blast of wind, had determined to roll

themselves round in their blankets wet as they were, till the morning, and they were suddenly exposed even in this miserable plight, by their tent being carried bodily away. They were shown to the eyes of their companions, or of those who joined in the passing chase after property, with figures similar to the animals which we see under water in summer, which we are told is the ante-natal-tomb of the coming gnat.

This scene outside however grotesque or painful, was far excelled in the latter quality in the temporary hospital, which by the repeated gusts of wind had become at last partially unroofed, and the unfortunate patients exposed alike to the driving rain and the violence of the wind. The suffering which this position brought upon Allen made him for the moment imagine that the last moment was come of his life ; and he had time to thank God that those happier recollections of the earlier part of the night had brought him back to a communion with Him, too long suspended. The wounded, however, in the hospital, were naturally the first objects of consideration to those in authority on this tremendous night ; and though some were hurried by the circumstance from this world of suffering more speedily than, humanly speaking, they would have been, most of them, and Allen among the rest, were conveyed with some difficulty down to other shelters which, though presenting but few comforts or facilities, yet were more protected from the elements and the weather ; and afforded at least a good hope of their inmates being conveyed by a speedy means to the larger accommodation at Scutari.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PASSAGE OF THE BLACK SEA.

THERE is a passage in Holy Scripture, which tells us that in the other world there "will be no more sea." The exact meaning of this statement it may be difficult for us to ascertain, but it brings to our mind of necessity some of those real sorrows, which the vast ocean of water which belts the world offers to the human race. Independently of the severance of one nation from another, the hindrance to free and easy intercourse, and the vast perils that belong to the storm, and the tempest to those that make the ocean their home, there are so many other calamities that belong to that element, that we are almost inclined to imagine that we see the reason why the exclusion of the sea from the eternal state of bliss is a necessary portion of the beautiful description. Added to the usual and more recognized horrors of the deep, are those many woes whose cry of anguish has never reached the shore on which the home-friend has been waiting, and whose keen throes and throbs of suffering have been witnessed but by the companion in trouble. Upon the deep have been those passages in which crowded down beneath the low deck the negro from Africa or the slave torn from the tribes that inhabit the banks of the Mozambique stream have in vain besought for freedom even by the hand of death, and still more vainly attempted to touch the iron heart of their fellow-men with the cry of their anguish.

Those voices and cries have sounded far over the waste of water, and never their faintest echo either reached the home of the suppliant or the shore which boasted of the race of the free. Upon the deep the long hours of horrible expectation in the mutiny have been known but to those whose last sufferings have never been detailed to their families or their native land except by the murderer at the hour of deserved retribution. Upon the deep how many a last breath has been drawn—how many a last tale told from the burdened bosom of life but just before the corpse was wrapped in its hasty cerements, and committed to the fathomless depth below, when in days gone by the love of a mother had gazed upon that very form, and imagined that her own warm bosom offered scarcely repose sufficient for the aching head. Upon the deep too have been spent those many days of suffering, when the sick or the wounded borne from the field of strife or from the battle upon the wave have been carried to the nearest hospital, which might afford healing to the wound, or give relief and rest to the last hours of suffering life. Upon the deep has been heard but by the shark that waited for its human prey the wail of anguish from those who have been wrecked upon the lonely rock ; and upon the waves of the deep the noise of artillery and the shout of the battle have been the only accompaniments which sounded over the death-cry of the British sailor. But whatever may have been the accustomed horrors of the sea, one was reserved for the present war, which perhaps had scarcely before had its exact parallel.

In that now too memorable passage between Balaklava and Scutari or Constantinople, taking up as it did sometimes more than three days and three nights in the tempestuous waters of the Euxine, there was one memorable occasion especially, when horrors met the eye, and cries of suffering, however patiently borne, struck upon the ear of humanity, in a way which will not be easily forgotten by those who either witnessed the scene or read the account. In the unprepared condition in which we were compelled to meet the present war the carriage of the wounded from the great battles of strife in the Crimea to the hospitals that had been erected upon the coasts of Turkey and Asia Minor was of an inconvenient and distressing kind. Ships overcrowded with unfortunate men, whose condition needed not only room and fresh air, but the most anxious and continued attendance, became in the course of a few hours the vast sepulchres of those that they had received upon their decks; and ere they reached the end of their voyage, appeared more like the bearers of the dead than the refuge of the sick and wounded.

It was in a vessel somewhat of this description that Allen, with a number of those who had been wounded at Balaklava and the preceding battle of the Alma, was placed in order to be conveyed to the hospital that was erecting under British charity upon the coasts of Turkey and Asia Minor. Having been carried down to the vessel with all the care that could be bestowed on a wounded officer, he soon discovered that while he, in company with some seven or eight of his own immediate comrades, was to be conveyed in the ship

to the other side of the Euxine, more than three hundred wounded private soldiers were occupying the vessel, strewing the decks both above and below, and presenting the most painful spectacles of suffering and of anguish. Human pain, in every possible form, presented itself to the eye; and when added to the tortured limb, wounded by the bolt or the stroke of battle, was the uneasy motion of the vessel; the narrow and cramped room; and for those who were on the lower decks the foetid air, made all the more awful by the matter that exuded from the already mortified and mortifying wounds of those who were doomed to die upon the passage, it perhaps brought before the mind as sad a condition of pain as the human frame can be subject to. It very soon appeared after the vessel had left the harbour, that the medical staff employed on board was far inadequate to the fearful demand that must be made upon its services.

The joy that played around the features of many of those who were borne down to the ship, carried from the uncomfortable and wretched quarters that were offered at Balaklava to the wounded, and under the happy prospect of kind and attentive nursing in the Hospitals that were erected in the neighbourhood of Constantinople was apparent. The delight of feeling that they were again bearing homewards, and that the sick eye would gaze every moment by day upon the clouds and by night upon the stars that were rolling or shining over the coast of their beloved native land, was very soon, however, chased away from the pale and sinking features as the uneven motion of the sea, and the

other accompaniments I have described robbed and cheated the sufferers of their happy and transient expectations.

In the course of the first day and night ten of those who had been conveyed on board had already died though manifesting a patience even more remarkable than that with which they had first borne the wound in the battle, and had passed the dreadful hours of a night upon the field. Allen himself was laid upon a bed by his own wish on the upper deck, and his wound which had rather shown increasingly bad symptoms than otherwise, was the immediate object of attention to one of the surgeons who had gone on board the vessel that carried the wounded. It was early in the voyage when the surgeon was about to examine the condition of Allen's wound, that the young officer turning round saw not far from him the emaciated face of a soldier of his own regiment, and seeing an uneasy motion of his head, as if he was striving to attract notice, or wished to say something, Allen lifted himself up to catch the words.

"Sir," said the sinking voice of the sufferer, "it is not for my own sake that I ask it, God knows I would gladly die where I am, and have no desire to see again the sight of land—I have had enough of suffering and of pain to make me wish that this life were over, but at home a wife and five children are praying for my return, and want and trouble stare them in the face if I am never restored to them; for their sakes and not for my own, I intreat you to let the surgeon examine my wound, and see if there is any chance of life or no. If he does not do so now, I shall have no chance of

being attended to, and I feel within myself as if every moment were so important to stay my ebbing life. If," said he, with increased difficulty as he spoke, "the surgeon can tell me at the sight of my wounds that nothing can be done, God forbid that I should let him remain with me to ease a minute's suffering, and take away his time from the care of those whom he may restore to life and their home; but the chance, sir, the chance of being restored to those I love, oh, the chance of it!" and as he spoke, a faint smile illumined his countenance, giving such life to his eye and his expression, as made the tears start to Allen's eye, and the admiration that he had ever felt for the character of the British soldier increased tenfold.

There was about this man something remarkable both in the refinement of his language and the tone of his voice, that made Allen the more surprised as coming from one in his situation. "Pray go," said Allen to the surgeon, who had begun to dress his wound, "leave me," added he, on seeing that the medical man was unwilling to obey his direction, imagining that it came from a mistimed feeling of benevolence and pity towards the supPLICATOR on his side, "pray leave me," said Allen, "and examine his wound, and tell me whether or not there be hope of his life."

The surgeon apparently with some reluctance drew away from the wounded officer, and approached the suffering man, who lay near the edge of the vessel. The eye that just now had been lit up by the beam of hope and joyous expectation, was fixed with an anxious gaze upon the surgeon, as he drew aside the

bandages that had been hastily bound round the ghastly wounds in his side and in his leg. He scanned the surgeon's countenance, in order to ascertain whether in it he was to read his death-warrant or not. Allen watched the face of the wounded soldier, and could not but be struck with the way in which personal suffering, which must have been keen as the dry and bloody bandages were torn from the wounds that bled afresh, was a matter of indifference to him, as if his single thought were fixed on those at home, and his value for life was that he might be restored to fulfil the duties of affection to them. It took but a minute's investigation of the already mortifying wounds, for the surgeon to shake his head and throw the bandages over the limb and the body of the afflicted sufferer. "Is there hope?" said he. The surgeon unwilling to answer was about to resume his place by Allen's side. "Speak," said Allen,—“tell him, is there hope of life? Surely,” added he with some degree of impetuosity, vexed at the apparent indifference of the medical officer, “Surely one who has already shown so great an indifference to his own personal or selfish feelings need not be included in that class from whom so many think it necessary to hide and conceal the tales of life or death.”

“There is no hope for him,” said the surgeon, shaking his head; “if I were to spend the next half hour over him it would be of no avail; he never can see as far as I can imagine to-morrow morning's light.” A sigh approaching to a groan of anguish burst from the lips of the wounded soldier as he heard his

death-warrant, and Allen's ear caught the words that fell from his lips,—“My poor Mary, my poor little ones, God Almighty have mercy upon you, and be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow.” The words seemed wrung from the depth of a heart which was suffering acutely, and Allen again turning to him, said, “My poor fellow, can I do nothing for you? if it pleases God to spare me to return to my native land can you tell me where your children are, that I may at least try to do what I can to relieve their destitution, and to carry intelligence of your last messages.” Again the dying man smiled. “Thank God, thank you for that word,” said he, as he tried to stretch out his hand to seize the one which Allen proffered to him,—“Yes, I will send a dying message, and it will cheer my last moments if I feel that one Christian man will carry my last words to them; and oh, if anything can be done to save them from want, above all to save them from growing up ignorant of God, I would thank you to all eternity.”

He spoke with earnestness and impetuosity. “I would not have the surgeon linger for an instant by me; my case is hopeless, and as soon as I am gone I must be thrown overboard to make room for others. Let it be done the moment the breath is out of my body; I would not discredit my profession as a soldier by yielding to any selfish thought of personal ease, but if I might be spared to give the message for you to convey home, I should be most grateful.”

So saying, he proceeded to give the last few words of his suffering life to Allen, who with difficulty wrote

them down upon a piece of paper, which he committed to his bosom, determining that the first mission that he would attend to on his return to England, if it were God's will he ever should reach it, would be to this poor soldier's widow and fatherless children. As night drew on, the increasing cold led those in authority to order that Allen and others whose wounds gave favourable signs of healing, should be conveyed below deck, in order that the keen frostiness of the air or the effect of the storm that appeared to be rising upon the sea, should not retard their recovery.

It was in the midst of the fever and delirium of that night when lying below the deck, that Allen heard the low murmuring of voices close above the port-hole near which he lay, and the next moment was a scuffling sound of those who seemed drawing to the edge some heavy weight, which was immediately followed by the plunge and splash into the midnight waters of another of those many dead who had been committed to their vast unfathomable sleep in the last few hours. It was the soldier who had committed his message to Allen's confidence whose corpse had that moment struck upon the billow and sunk to be seen till the Judgment day no more.

It struck upon Allen's heart in a way in which no other circumstance had as yet struck him. The multitudes that had fallen around him beneath the sickle of battle; the groan, the shout, the shriek, or the cry of anguish, or the field itself, soon become customary to the ear, and to excite no more sensation or feeling in the heart than the ordinary recital

in the tale, or the page of history, of the sorrows or the sufferings of humanity. But there are events which take place in the midst of the most crowded and indifferent life, which though in no degree differing from multitudes of others around them in point of kind, yet are permitted by God to affect the feelings in a remarkable manner, and to open out the fountain of our deeper nature which plays around us softening what hitherto perhaps had been hard and dry and arid. The little circumstance that had occurred had done more to break down the impenetrable reserve with regard either to the expression of his own feelings, or the recognition of those of others which existed in Allen, than any circumstance since he had left his mother's house; and led him to more real prayer, to a more sincere desire to live for, and to consider the feelings of his fellow-creatures than he remembered having realised since he was a boy. God permits these occurrences to take place from time to time in life. We may labour in vain to ascertain their metaphysical history; we may be perplexed, or perplex ourselves for hours in striving to understand why it is that a circumstance affects us so much as nearly to alter the whole course of life, when a hundred similar circumstances happening to us for days and months and years gone by, have never had a single passing influence upon our character. The perplexity will be all in vain. The solution is not to be found in any metaphysical disquisition or inquiry, but only in reference to that Almighty Being who sends forth His Angels as "ministers to those who shall be heirs of salvation;" and Who directs the arrow

of human circumstance drawn at no chance venture from the bow, but with full strength, to pierce the joints of the armour which with otherwise impenetrable scales had covered over the human soul from the contact of good. It is for us to attend to those calls, and at once to permit the tenderer emotions of our nature to have their way.

In the course of three days the ship that was carrying Allen had reached its destination, but not before some forty of those who had entered it alive had been committed to their watery grave, and horrors had taken place which stand amidst the first of those which mark the earlier period of this war. The deck in many parts bore the most dreadful witness to the unattended and unexamined wounds of the soldiers; and the very vermin bred by the corruption, as we are told by eye-witnesses, crawled over the bodies of the living and those who were recovering, infected the very food that they ate, and tended to make the whole vessel loathsome to the eye, and horrible to the memory. The distracted medical officers unable to do one quarter of the work which they were called upon to attend to, unable to repose even for half an hour, because of the cries which assailed them on every side, and scarcely permitted to walk for a yard along the deck for the sup-
plicating arms and hands that were stretched out to arrest their progress to examine the condition of some
und, or to alleviate some suffering, all of them showed
hurried and unprepared way in which England was
led to participate in this gigantic struggle, and the
absolute necessity there is to be ever ready for those

contingencies which must belong to the daily lot of nations, as of individuals.

When Allen reached the shore, he was with some difficulty conveyed upon the shoulders of the inhabitants to the hospital which is erected at some little distance from the sea. This passage was extremely painful to those whose wounds were still not healed, and though unavoidable formed a very distinct and definite part in the recollections of the sufferings connected with the war. Having reached the hospital, for a few days he was unable to enjoy the repose and comfort which attention and care surrounded him with; but after a short time he was able to realise the blessedness of that kind of solicitude which none thoroughly value until they have been placed in situations such as his.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SCUTARI.

TIME wore away. Allen's recovery was retarded, and though he dictated more than one letter to his mother during this period, he heard nothing of her or from her. He frequently wandered in his thought to that quiet home where he had been accustomed for so many years to watch patiently-borne poverty for the sake of enabling him to struggle more easily with the difficulties of life, and to pass through its tempests and its dangers the more safely.

It was one evening some time after his arrival, that

he was lying thinking of the past and the possible future in the way that I have just described, when he heard a footstep enter the ward into which his own room opened, and was full of those who had been recently brought from the Crimea. Miss Nightingale's companions in mercy and in labours of love had already begun to do their work in the wards of the Scutari hospital, and amongst those works few were more blessed and happy than that of cheering the hours of lingering recovery by reading to the soldiers even accounts of the war itself from the newspapers sent out from home—by refreshing their memory of holy things, by reading tales and stories that brought back the occupations and instructions of boyhood, and by writing letters from the lips of the soldiers to their relatives and friends at home.

Occupied in this manner, those good women who went with or followed Miss Nightingale, spent the greater portion of the hours of their day, which were not actually required for attention to the wounds of those who were brought into the hospital. Their special work and mission were with the private soldier, and not with the officer; although in several instances the officers listened to the words and tones of consolation and instruction with happy attention; and learnt the lessons which were not immediately directed to their cases.

On this evening Allen had been lying musing upon the past and his home, anxious to recover so far as to warrant his return to England, when the footstep which he had heard in the adjoining ward struck upon his ear. Few things would appear at first sight to

present less variety than the footstep of strangers in a foreign land, and when, as in a hospital, the nurse goes to and fro in the room, few sounds would, as we imagine, at length become more monotonous. But a footstep may be the medium of communication through those delicate means of affecting the sense which no human science can either analyse or explain. The sound this evening had arrested Allen, he knew not why; he found himself beginning to wonder who it was that had entered the ward, and what the immediate object of the visitant might be. The footstep stopped, as it seemed to him; for he could not see into the ward on the other side of which the nurse had entered. By the sounds that followed, he gathered that she, whoever it was who had entered was taking her place either to write the indited letter, or to while away the sufferings of half an hour by reading. His attention being more than usually awakened to what hitherto had become the hourly monotony of life, the voice that rose upon the stillness struck upon his ear as it read the parable of the barren fig-tree spared for "one year more." At first the voice passed over him as the sound of a tone of music heard in years ago, and he was so engaged in the effect of the actual melody, that he did not at that moment stay to consider the source from whence it sprung. As he listened feelings were awakened by the intonation awakening memories of the past in his own thoughts which he had had which he could now recall, and which hitherto had lain in the deep slumber of forgotten years. They seemed to open upon him fast. Things over which the eye-lids of past days had been

dropped. Voices which had spoken with him, the conscience, the conviction, the hope, and earnest intention, which had become dull in his soul, now began one by one to speak again with the clear accents of years gone by. What was it? if he had had time at that moment to track the pathway of his associations, what was it that in connection with the voice which was reading broke up so mysteriously the mists and shadows that had dropped over his childhood? and why should that voice, as if it came from one authorized to lead to the haunts of early days, have the power to do so much more than to convey the exact meaning of the parable?

The voice ceased; and even yet Allen had not discovered the history of his feelings, nor traced the associations to their source and home. He listened eagerly and unconsciously to himself; he had drawn himself to the edge of the pillow, and had placed his ear so that through the crevice of the doorway he should catch the faintest accent that fell from the visitant of mercy.

The reading of the parable was followed immediately by some question put by the soldier to whom it had been read, which did not reach his ear, but as the voice of the sick man drew to the end of his sentence, Allen could almost hear his own pulse beat with the expectation with which he listened to the answer that might be given. As far as he could gather, the question had been with reference to the meaning of "the fig-tree spared for one year more," for the answer in the same tones of voice which had read the parable was as follows:—"The Gardener in this story

is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, always wanting to forgive and spare the sinner until he has had time quite to repent, for He does not wish the death of a sinner, but wishes all to come to Him and be saved."

The voice, the words, the sentiment and tone in which it was spoken, came home to Allen's memory; and starting from the pillow on which he lay, he cried out "My mother."

The next instant a figure darkened the doorway of his room, and in another Allen wept upon the widow's bosom.

"Allen, my child, my child," said the faithful mother, "thank God for His wonderful Providence in bringing me to the place where you were. I imagined you were far away."

"Oh, my mother!" said Allen, "how wonderful are His ways, past finding out! to think that the old parable read, and the explanation recollected from the days of my childhood mixed up with your voice which I scarcely ever thought to hear again, should be the means of bringing us together."

It would be difficult to describe what the feelings of that moment of meeting were, and how infinitely beyond all the other joys that gather round those ordinary meetings in life which we value too little. That meeting between Allen and his mother, thus unexpectedly brought about by the Providence of God, can only be fully appreciated by being seen in contrast with the agonies of those partings which the present war has so signally and sadly brought about; the hour when the news first reached the home of the death of a son or a bro-

ther, the first opening of the *Times*; the gazette of the killed and "dangerously wounded;" and when the eyes which scarcely saw, and the hand which scarcely held the trembling page at last rested still for a moment on the beloved name ninth or tenth in the column, which told that the Benjamin of the home, the youngest, the dearest beloved of the family, had, a few hours before, lain cold, and stiff and still upon the desolate battle-field! That instant when the mother's face fell as she recollected the loving or the laughing eye of him on whom she had gazed when cradled in his infant hour upon her arms, and imagined that at least if he died before her he would die there, now to have met death so far away from even the possibility of alleviating one of its pangs, or of receiving one of those last words which seem so to relieve the bosom of the dying! Contrast partings like those with the meetings of Allen and his mother, and we value each in their true light. When on the threshold of the mansion or the cottage the last farewell has been uttered, and the eye that tries to gaze towards the lodge or the latticed gate gazes its last glance as the figure is borne away from sight, the gazer returns to muse through one aching hour upon the possibilities of the future, and events of the past. He returns to do the daily work of life under the conviction that in the usual occupations of the daily call and the fulfilment of our duty to God, our station and our fellows, we shall find that relief to the anguish of the mind which will best dull the keen point of suffering, and bring that comfort which alone

can spring from fulfilling the duties that we owe to God and to our neighbour. Those moments which so many of us have known of in the present war, will enable us to understand the joy of Allen's meeting, and the pang of the parting of thousands. Allen and his mother were at least temporarily restored to each other.

Virtue was its own reward ; and in going forth upon a mission of mercy to any of those who might be in suffering, the mother had been restored to her child, and the last days of the recovery of one to whom she had devoted the whole of her life were committed to her tender keeping. Who more than a mother can do that blessed work !

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WOMAN.

How beautiful the trait of God's providential care, especially in connection with this relationship of a mother appears in the tale of the child, who, floating in the bulrush ark, was by the order of Pharaoh's daughter committed to the care of one of the nurses of the Hebrew women, and when the trembling infant nestled upon the bosom of its nurse, it found the accustomed breast of its mother.

Few things can show us the mercy of God in the arrangements of our daily path more than when in the hour of suffering He permits us to be thrown unex-

pectedly upon those relationships in life which He has consecrated either by His special ordinance or by His blessed example.

It is only the mother who would be watching by at the risk of life, to come forward when the hired nurse was sent for, to catch the infant from the ark of refuge. It is only the mother who can consent to pass the years of life away from the child after whose cry she yearns, rather than see that child suffer beneath the sword of the wise King. It is only the mother who can through the frost of the night, and through the burning heat of day, watch the corpse upon the plain, to "keep off the bird of the air, or the beast of the field." It is only the mother who knows how to solicit for the life of the child she loves even at the feet of the tyrant whose cruelty may be heaped upon her in the place of him for whom she intercedes. It was only the mother and the beloved Disciple who stood gazing, despite the shame, despite the peril through the long hours of mid-day on the Hill of Calvary, watching Him who yielded His Spirit to God; and whose Brow crowned with thorns could not and might not find repose in death. But whatever may be the high and holy feelings connected with these relationships in life, woman independent of any particular connection with us has a mission in the season of war and calamity which is noble and glorious. She redeems in those instances the dark stain which the first woman left upon the historic page of the world and she follows in the footsteps of that great Body of which she is a type, the ministering Church, the Bride of CHRIST.

There have been crises in the history of the world when woman has done, conceived, or imagined what man has been at a loss to plan. A woman's ready judgment, a woman's patient perseverance, a woman's determined heroism, a woman's conscious inspiration from heaven,—above all, a woman's voice powerfully eloquent to cheer and to support when all hope seemed to fail and all energy to flag, has saved nations, wrested the ruin of empires, and supported the failing spirit of the man, when but for the accents of her voice his energies would have fallen powerless and lifeless as those of a corpse. Every age has seen woman's mission. The struggles of France with England beheld the heroism of the maid of Orleans. The early days of the Roman Republic were marked by the devotion of the mother who loved Rome while she loved her son, and consented to the deepest humiliation to save the city which tottered to its fall. The ready skill and rapid judgment of Judith saved the people of Bethulia from the machinations of Holofernes; and more than one illustrious queen of the savage tribes of our native land has adorned the page of history, and handed down to posterity from the very regions of savage life female heroism in a way of which we ourselves at the present moment stand astonished at the recital.

The present war has been destined in the same manner to see the position of woman in connection with it, and that in a manner accordant with her distinctive disposition and vocation, of being the cheerer in the hour of suffering, the watch through the sentinel hours

of the night, the medium of transition for the words of love or messages of parting between the soldier and his wife at home, the connecting link with the wife's voice which in his own cottage spoke to him in accents of encouragement in the days past of difficulty,—all these form one of the most touching and admirable powers of the female sex. And when Miss Nightingale first conceived her great design and issued forth on her work of mercy, however unconsciously, she was yet filling up one vacuum in the past page of history, which records the feats of woman side by side with man, and added to the noble list of female heroism, perseverance, inspiration, and patience, and that perhaps the noblest of all, the application of female sympathy on the battle-field, in the hospital, and the dying hours, to the wounded and suffering soldier.

It may have struck many with something like a pang, that so many have gone forth even in this present war on works that are inseparably mixed up with mercy, whose names have been scarcely known beyond the circle of their own homes and families; and whose deeds have been unrecorded, and attracted no more notice than that of the casual reader of the news of the day. The army surgeon, however much he may bestow the utmost attention to the wounded—and what occasion gives greater opportunity for such attention!—feels, as we have been told with a just and worthy chagrin, that no honour awaits him, no promotion proportionate to his efforts, no recognition in his native land, in the same way in which such meeds are awarded to the

hero of the trench, or the successful assailant of the battery.

One name has come down immortal in the history of the present war, that of Doctor Thompson, who was left behind to guard and heal the wounded Russians after the Alma, and who so heroically remained by his post even after the troop of the Cossack shouted death upon the blast. He sunk to a premature grave at Balaklava, but not with an unhonoured or forgotten name. With this exception, how little have we heard of those many acts of patient endurance that no doubt have marked the medical staff of our army. This should surely be looked into, and those whose sufferings are perhaps quite as great as any connected with the war, and whose mission is quite as important, should at least have their chance of the grateful recognition and homage of their country at home. In the same way how many a clergyman has gone forth during the passing months of the war, impelled by a strong sense of self-devotion and the duty of yielding up his whole life for the salvation of souls and the glory of God, whose brief annals have been wound up by the rapid death of cholera, of fever in the Crimea, or the sinking prostration of the voyage home, whose brief and rapid acts upon the field of battle, or the night after the strife, have scarcely reached even the knowledge of his parent or his friends at home, but yet are marked in the great book of God, and will be revealed when all secrets are proclaimed upon the housetops. Nevertheless we regret that there has not been a more definite and clear mission given to the clergy in the present

war, and one which might elevate their noble and sacred profession in the eyes of the world, who are too much inclined to undervalue the ministrations of the spiritual kingdom of CHRIST. These two lines of life have been too much neglected in the present campaign.

The third, to which we have just referred, has been a redeeming point ; and the mission of woman, the nurses of the hospital of Scutari and Balaklava, the kind and faithful attendance at so many a dying pillow, the ear that has been the recipient of so many a last message to the wife and the mother at home, the affectionate forbearance through the hours of irritable convalescence or the patient sinking will never be forgotten, will never be allowed to exist without its memorial as long as England has homes, at whose hearths mothers sit, and around whose tables and at whose doors gather the affection of childhood, and the watchfulness of the wife.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

KILLARNEY.

BUT it is time that we should return to one or two of the personages of our tale, who though perhaps but little interwoven with its main and more important incidents, yet are belonging to the by-plot of the story. They resemble those scenes and events that pass too often unnoticed and unregarded on our right hand and on our left hand in life, which life is after all but

the plot of a tale. The event which happens to our neighbour is of more importance to us than we are inclined to make it.

Mr. Randall, whose position both with regard to Brandon and the events of the Crimea, has occupied no unimportant portion of this tale, after the death of his son and the last terrible battle of Inkermann, had determined to leave the Crimea, and return to his native land, impelled by a desire if possible to ascertain where the unfortunate being who had shared his early follies and his early sins might be. The tale of the dying boy had awakened in the husband and the father's bosom a feeling to which he had almost been a stranger, and which the iron hand of the world had rather tended to lock up in his own breast than to permit to break from a heart which genuinely longed to give it vent. Mr. Randall, as the readers already have seen, was a man of strong impulse and sensitiveness of feeling. Those two properties had been the cause of many of the faults of his life, and since these faults had been committed, had been the cause of some errors in his judgment, and morbidity in his sensations. It is true that the great fall in life such as that which had marked Mr. Randall's career, is a natural precursor to a course of peculiar self-devotion. It is also true that the best refuge for many from the recurrence of such a fall would be the life of severe discipline, if it were not for one of self-imposed rule of asceticism and seclusion from the world. Nevertheless, while that may be the case, and while such a rule may apply to many in the history of life, there are

on the other hand a large number who are inclined to apply it to themselves with a perverted judgment. The very characteristic which leads a man to faults of this kind is one which would also dictate to him an exclusive and remarkable line of penitence and reformation. There may be as much self-seeking in the peculiarity and eccentricity of the line of reform as there was in the act of committed sin. It is in many cases more painful, more healthy, and more the duty of a fallen man to recover his position alike before God and his neighbour, by remaining in those very scenes which have been the witness of his infirmity, and in the presence of those persons whose eye may often kindle the blush of shame. It is by restoring character in the very walks where that character has been lost, and by uttering words "that may minister grace to the hearers" in the very ears which have been polluted by the blasphemy of a day gone by, that a man shows the reality of his penitence and reaches that healthy situation of restoration to God which is real in proportion as it is painful.

True, in other days the monastery often offered alike to the royal and the low born penitent a refuge and an opportunity of repentance; and the cloister in its secluded shelter often echoed to the monotonous tread of the foot which had once passed rapidly and gaily through the mazes of the dance; the lip too has grown dry under the severities and austerities of monastic life which once touched the cup of the revel and the purple blood of the grape. But such acts of penitence were perhaps suited peculiarly to the age that gave them

birth, and the very nature of the committed crimes made the monastery almost the only opportunity of deep and real penitence for the fallen of past days. I do not mean that such a refuge is not for some cases earnestly to be desired now, nor would I be for one moment understood to desire that that painful vacuum should continue unfilled in the system of our own Church, which offers no authoritative refuge for the lapsed child of God. Nevertheless, what has just been said is true of numberless cases, and amongst them of Mr. Randall. He would probably have sought more correctly, and reached more healthily the end for which God destined him, in striving to accommodate himself to the suddenness of the alterations of his life in the very haunts in which he had fallen, and in there performing those duties to his neighbour which he had so neglected.

Impressed by feelings such as these, which very likely the death of his child, and the words that fell from his lips in connection with his mother roused, Mr. Randall immediately after the battle of Inkermann signified his intention to Loraine of leaving the Crimea and seeking a home again in his native land. He was not one who was inclined to unbosom his mind to those with whom he even was most intimate, and he was one who frequently failed to recognize to himself the conclusions to which he came. There is a reserve which is held towards the communion of our own spirit; there is a fear, and a salutary one, which a man has even of himself; there is a respect which we may have for our own judgment and our own conscience, which compels us to live in awe of them, as if they were

separate beings to our will. Mr. Randall was one who felt this.

The vessel in which he returned home landed at Cork, a neighbourhood which he was peculiarly anxious for reasons that our reader will already anticipate, to explore.

On the evening after his reaching the Cove, Mr. Randall was sitting in the coffee room of an inn, in which he had found a temporary abode before going further into the country. It was there that he gathered from the conversation of some of the guests that were present intimations which induced him at once to repair to the neighbourhood of those far-famed Lakes of Killarney, which his child had mentioned to him as the scene in which he had spent the concluding months of his life before joining the army. Accordingly the next day, Mr. Randall taking with him the few things he had brought from the Crimea, started for the Lakes in question with the prayer that his mission might be blessed, and that he might succeed in finding the object of his search.

It was towards the afternoon of the day on which he had left Cork that he came in sight of the lovely scenery of those Lakes which approach more nearly to those of Northern Italy than any other sheets of water in Britain; and whose exquisite outline of mountain and hill fringed with the national emerald of their country resemble more than any other hills in Britain the soft ranges which gird Maggiore and Como. The scene was lovely, for though he had left striking grandeur in the scene of war, he came back to his native

land with those feelings with which every traveller returns to it. We are astonished amid the stupendous sublimity of the eternal snow of the Alps. We stand charmed with the fairy-like beauty of the continental city, with the sunny atmosphere of Paris, of Frankfort, or of Florence, and with the deep glow of the sunset and the mountain at Naples. We stand astonished with the azure blue of the leaping Rhone, as it plunges from the Lake of Geneva to its grave in the Arve; and we are astonished in such scenes that there is anything in England that can charm or delight us; yet when we return there is a strange power in the sloping hill, the copse, and the pond in the green lane, the sward by the side of it, the falling chestnut, the geese that strut across the common, and the thatched cottage with its clustering roses creeping round the eaves of the window; the cottage garden enamelled with the pink, wallflower, and the honeysuckle, and the child that stands beneath the wicket gate which is more beautiful than all. There are scenes of this land that as we return to them make us say there is nothing like England; whether it be from simply the force of association connected with our own bygone days, or whether it be from some similarity between the character of the inhabitants of a nation and its physical scenery, it may be hard to determine.

These feelings came over the mind of our traveller. The coach on which he had got after leaving the railroad drove up to one of those dirty and uncomfortable inns in the town of Killarney. Retirement being his immediate object, and if possible, for a time, conceal-

ment, Mr. Randall determined on staying in the town, despite its discomforts, instead of going down to one of the larger hotels which stand on the borders of the lake. A small inn by the side of the street was therefore suited to his situation and aim. Having taken down his bag, entered the inn, and selected the room in which he chose to sleep, he preferred sitting for the evening in what we should in our own public-houses call the tap-room. The scenes in Killarney, despite the filth and dirt of the town, and the various discomforts which surround the traveller on entering it, nevertheless are highly graphic and natural. The concourse of people that gather round the coach that has just arrived, the grotesque dresses in which they appear, the hordes of boys in the long black tail coat, which they never are without, however the rags that hang from beneath it may betoken abject poverty at home ; the multitudes of women which troop with them, soliciting the passing alms, yet at the same time, by attitude, grimace, and shout of laughter, showing how very little the actual bodily want of it has depressed the spirit ; form an entertaining picture. The peculiar Murillo-like cast of the Spanish countenance, the dark eye, the protruding brow, and the sunken cheek, surrounded by the ragged hair, alike in the boy and the woman, give a scene of national distinctiveness which perhaps exists in no other country in the north of Europe so forcibly except in the towns of Brittany.

The groups which immediately filled the streets of Killarney on the arrival of the conveyance that brought

Mr. Randall, highly entertained him and his fellow-travellers as they stood gazing from the window on a scene entirely novel and peculiar. In the course of a few minutes, as a matter of course, a quarrel arose in the street, and the noise and jargon of the varied combatants, and those that seconded them, which numbered far more of the fair sex than of their partners, were perfectly uproarious. The vociferations of wrath and fury breaking from lips which had just now curled with the most humorous and good-natured smiles, the sudden transformation of figures into the attitudes of combatants, which just now had as gracefully and naturally assumed the attitude of suppliants, at once arrested the attention of those that were looking on, and diverted Mr. Randall's thoughts from those objects which had so absorbed his attention up to the moment of his arrival in Ireland.

The next feature which struck the eye was the arrival of the Irish police, who, armed with swords and cocked hats, assumed a military aspect highly alarming to the English traveller, yet they soon seemed to be actually necessary for the uncivilized condition of the population of a town so near a spot visited as much as Killarney is. Upon the arrival of this new body upon the field the combatants dropped off, and amidst yells and screams, threats and exclamations of vengeance, shouts of laughter, and peals of merry wit through many a filthy alley, and under many a low and darkened doorway the varied forms suddenly melted and disappeared; and, to Mr. Randall's astonishment, the street was, in the course of two minutes, left entirely empty, with no ob-

ject for his eye to rest upon, except the horseless coach which stood out on the pavement, and the tall gaunt and uninteresting looking houses which started up on the other side of the narrow street. In the course of another half hour the arrival of another conveyance from the railway, bringing fresh passengers, fresh opportunities of half-pence, and fresh strangers to be entertained with the naïvety of the scene, drew forth again the swarm of crones, children, and women, mothers dragging their children by the arm, and black-coated boys, who rushed forward, in vain struggling to drag the rags of their under garments to shelter their swarthy legs from the eyes of the occupants of the outside of the coach. The re-assemblage of this army of Amazons and children was so rapid as again to excite with the highest interest our friends in the inn. It was more like the gathering of those multitudinous flies that swarm round the ear of an irritated horse under the burning sun of an August day, and which scattered by the flash of a whip, are in the course of another minute assembled round their unfortunate victim with exactly the same force and numbers with which they had appeared before; and we sit marvelling upon their strange powers of being ever ready, go at what pace we may, to resume their position round the limb of their prey.

The second scene promised to outvie the first, alike in humour, merriment and war; and Mr. Randall was preparing to study what might transpire, when his attention was drawn to a new object which seemed to have struck already on the eye of one of his fellow-travellers. The words "poor thing" dropped from his lips—"look

there." The expression spoken inadvertently had already attracted the notice of one of those who were standing at the window; and on looking across the street in the direction to which the first speaker pointed, Mr. Randall saw the figure of a woman, dressed more neatly than any one of those who were gathered in the street, and indicating by her appearance rather the English reserve and neatness, than the extravagant originality of the Irish manners and customs. She was a woman above the middle stature; her dress, though indicating great poverty, was yet clean, and her face protected by the bonnet which no one else Mr. Randall had seen since his arrival in Ireland seemed to care to wear.

On inquiry made by one of those present the first speaker answered, "Stay a moment; when she looks round, you will see reason enough for my exclamation." The woman was standing before the window of a house on the other side of the street. Her back was turned towards them, and she seemed in the attitude of one who was waiting patiently, though anxiously, to make an inquiry or to receive an answer. A small group of some three or four other persons were gathered round the same window, all of them apparently waiting for some movement to take place in connection with the window itself.

"What are they waiting for?" said Mr. Randall, turning to the waiter who had just come in to spread the cloth for the dinner which our coach guests had ordered, and determined to share between them. The waiter brushed with his apron the crumbs off the cloth, which

had already served for four dinners, and placing the large wooden platter on the table which contained three different kinds of cheese, and another holding the remnants of four sorts of bread, which had already been in each case cut with an oniony knife, without leaving off his employment, simply said,

"Oh, that is the post-office, which will be opened presently, and there will be a rare sight of people, if you want to see something of Killarney life, who will come for their letters in a trice after it is open." He had hardly said these words before a movement in the group opposite showed that the wished-for moment had arrived, and the slide in the window being pushed back, eager hands were stretched forward for the expected letter, and the penny or the two-pence that had been grasped for so many minutes so tenaciously was thrown down with reckless delight as the prized letter was caught hold of.

Reader, I did not stand by that group, nor did I know any body who did; we can but surmise what the questions that were asked were, or what the writings on the various envelopes might have been. That in an Irish tone some one asked for a letter directed to "Father," and that with scarcely a smile on his countenance, the postman passed the applicant by, would be in the range of possibility. We have heard indeed of some such story; or that some man asked if there were a letter from "My Joe," and that the answer was given as the envelope was chucked to him: "Here is one directed to 'the Governor,' and no doubt 'the Governor' answers to 'Joe.'" That some of the envelopes bore

the postmark of Balaklava, and that some were written in nearly illegible ink with the long direction, which seemed to hesitate when it reached the word "Ireland" as to whether it had put enough, and whether it was not necessary to specify the continent itself, the hemisphere, or the very kosmos, is a matter again of more than probability. But if I had been standing there either reading envelopes over the shoulders of the eager inquirers, or looking out for Irish bulls in the questions of applicants, or the answers of surly postmen, I should undoubtedly have been attracted by that figure which had already drawn out the remark of our coach companion. She too had asked for a letter, and the tone of her voice as well as the attitude of her figure hesitating and anxious as both were, as of one who often expecting had been often disappointed, anticipated the answer ; a hope that seemed to be without hope.

She had already turned sadly, and yet in a manner monotonously away, as if she was one who had frequently sped her weary walk upon the same fruitless errand, and had caught the very trick of finding her way to the window of the post-office in Killarney, and of tracing her way back, desolate, disappointed, and broken-hearted. Such was the impression of her attitude and figure ; such was strongly the impression given to our coach companions, as for a moment she turned her face towards the window of the inn, and its paleness and exquisite sadness seemed at once to justify the exclamation of "poor thing," which our first speaker had uttered. The sudden turning of that

face met the eye of Mr. Randall, who had already been watching her, drawn by the peculiarity of her movement, as well as by the remark of the man who was standing by him. The waiter, who seemed entertained at the fresh views of life which had broken on the minds of his guests at the window at the entrance to Killarney, and the first sight of Irish life, had come up to them, and looking out with them, announced as his weather-wise eye told him, that another volcano was about breaking round the wheels of the last vehicle which had drawn up on the side of the street, of a more formidable and tempestuous character than the last. But seeing that the post office had drawn off the attention of his guests, he said, "Oh, that is a woman who is well known now in this part. She lives, I believe, somewhere out in the wild district by the pass of Dunloe. She comes here day after day for some letter which she never gets. Some people say that she is not as sharp as she might be, some say that she is mad; but many say that she is one who has got a troubled spirit. But for my part, I do not know. Such people are unkind sad to look at. I believe she is more knave than fool, as all these Irish people are."

"But," said Mr. Randall, whose eye had followed to the corner of the street the retiring figure of the object of their conversation, "she does not seem by her dress or appearance to be one of the inhabitants of this town, nor to deserve the title of an Irish woman."

"No," said the waiter, "some people say she is English; but for my part, gentlemen, if you sit here much

longer to see all the wonderful sights that our Town of Killarney presents to your eye, and are entertained by our good folk in this character, you will have no dinner to-night. The potatoes will grow cold. I can assure you that after you have dined you will find plenty going on in the street to amuse you till it is dark. It is wonderful to my mind," said the waiter, as if a thought had suddenly struck him which had a peculiar piquancy on the present occasion ; "it is wonderful to me, gentlemen, that with all the marvellous sights that we have to show, the Irish life and manners in the town of Killarney, so many of the guests that come here go down to the great hotels at the water side, where they are strangely put upon for prices, and where I know very well that they do not get the best of food and fare. They can see nothing but English faces coming out of every room, and English chamber-maids to wait upon them. It appears to me, though I may be thought an interested person, that those that travel for information and study of life and character, are far better in the town of Killarney. If people come to Killarney, let them stay at Killarney,—that is as I think however."

The thought certainly struck him with a force on this occasion with which it never had before; and with that peculiar nod of the head, he intimated that he was quite prepared to continue any amount of conversation through dinner which might comprehend the whole history of Ireland, past, present and future, the glories of Daniel O'Connell, the powerful oratory of Curran and of Grattan, and the patriotism of that pure

Irishman, Mr. Duffy, which belongs to every Irish waiter, as much as the knowledge of the news contained in the second edition last night, is the property of every barber from the celebrated Oliver of Louis XI., down to the last barber who shaved us at Paris.

However much his companions might have been inclined to carry on the conversation with their loquacious garçon, Mr. Randall was absorbed in other thoughts; and yet you might have read by his manner that those were thoughts which he did not wish to divulge or to betray by the questions which he cautiously asked while they were over their meal. Those questions reverted more than once to the woman at the post office, who with the scene around her had floated from the memory of his companions at dinner.

The new scenes around the last arrival, were, if not present to their eyes, made strongly sensible to the hearing, since the noise and din of the next battle all but rose above the stentorian lungs and graphic and entertaining conversation of the Killarney Syrus. Dinner over, Mr. Randall said that he intended to walk out with the hope of seeing the lake before nightfall, and that he would return to the Inn anyhow before midnight, and begging that means of entrance might be left him if he should come back late; he was on the point of leaving the room.

"You will not go down to the lake safely to-night," said the waiter, evidently alarmed lest the appearance of the lake hotels and the lovely scene on which they looked, might possibly, if such a thing were possible, shake the credit of Mr. Randall in the waiter's account

of the contrast between the town and the country guests and their comparative intellectual excellence.

"Oh, yes!" said Mr. Randall, "I will take care of myself."

"It is a dangerous country without guides," said the waiter, "and we have guides at the inn, far superior to those at the Victoria."

"Thank you," said Mr. Randall, "I would rather be without a guide; I think I have some years ago been in the district, and I do not fear that I shall either be lost or get into a difficulty," smiling at the waiter's pertinacity, "and do not imagine, my good friend, that my evening ramble will have any kind of effect upon my mind in leading me to undervalue the high and intellectual entertainment that your window affords the passing traveller."

So saying, Mr. Randall left the room, and his figure in the course of a few moments passing quickly by announced alike to guests and to waiter, that he had something more in view than merely an evening ramble. Pursuing the course of the narrow dirty street, Mr. Randall plunged into the lane round the corner of which he had watched the receding figure of the disappointed applicant at the post window; but whither to direct his steps he scarcely knew. One indication alone had been given him by the waiter—the pass of Dunloe. Report, as well as the guide-book that he had in his pocket, had described this Pass as one of the most savage and magnificent in Ireland.

Rising in singular and picturesque contrast with the soft loveliness of the scenes of the lake itself,

this pass had a very few years ago been dangerous to the traveller from the wild and almost barbarous habits of the inhabitants that surrounded it, and has been fatal within a very short time to the equestrian traveller from the rugged and precipitous nature of the roads. Mr. Randall knew that around the entrance to this pass were clustered several of those peculiar hovels in which the Irish live where they can pursue with considerable success their favourite trade of begging; and where the very picturesqueness of the formation of the hut, and the apparent poverty of the inmates extorted through the successive months of summer the not reluctant pence of the multitude of travellers that pass the hill side. A kind of instinct bid him take that pass to-night, an instinct he could scarcely fathom or define, but the natural tone of his mind, somewhat superstitious and gloomily influenced by the slightest concatenation of circumstances, induced him to pursue as if he were walking after a mountain guide, the pass of Dunloe. With some difficulty he found his way towards the head of the lake.

The evening lights played and lingered around the edge of the beautiful hill that rises on the left hand of the third lake; the foliage of the trees that gather and cluster round the meeting of the waters was softened off by the last beams of the light of day, and the water without a ripple lay like a sheet of mirror outspread before his face. He stood for a moment to gaze on the lovely scene, and uttering a sigh at the contrast of that exquisite placidity which

represents nature with the turbid anguish of the human soul, when tossed as his was by the waves of uncertainty and doubt, he pursued his path.

If he had stopped to ask himself why he had taken one road more than another, and why he ventured as the shades of evening were closing in, to plunge into a country so little known to himself, as the one to which he went, and why without meeting any one who could give him information with regard to the object of his search he so readily found his way, he probably would have been unable to answer the question. But following an instinct he followed a guide.

With some difficulty, and before the twilight had completely paled off with its soft silvery light the forms of nature around him, he reached the barren moorland which terminates with the grand yet gloomily awful mountains which shut in the famous pass. To-night the twilight was sufficiently strong to bring out the stern grandeur of the opening of the chasm, and to show in the vicinity of what sublime forms of nature human beings can live on the meanest of occupations and very often in the exercise of the lowest vices. The forms of nature by themselves are unable to inculcate great moral lessons on the untutored mind. Nature does teach, but acts rather as the commentator and interpreter of the text than as the text itself. Until the mind has been formed, and the powers, to a certain degree, brought out, nature has scarcely any effect upon the character. Neither the eternal monotony of the sea, the sublimity of the mountain speaking of the awfulness of the Presence of the Unseen : the gay warbling of the

summer stream which passes through the green woodland or the copse telling of that solace which the mind receives from the lighter intercourse of life with our fellows ; none of these can read their lesson to the mind which has not been already opened and instructed to receive them. Therefore it is that we are often startled by finding human nature in its most hideous form beneath the shadows of the sublimest scenery of the physical world, and the human mind in its most depressed and painful condition, when living within sight of the loftiest forms with which God has beautified creation ; the Cretin and the goitrous under the peaks of Monte Rosa.

Thoughts like these came over the mind of Mr. Randall as he gazed on the sublime sight before him, and his eye fell upon the numberless huts and hovels around whose entrances in the twilight were yet hovering and moving the tall gaunt figures of the Irish women. They wore their hoods over their heads, beneath whose folds straggled the streamers of their rough grey hair ; their feet were bare upon the heather, and their uncovered arms were outstretched upon the evening sky ; while their loud voice, softened somewhat by the expanse of the moorland on which they stood, summoned half-naked children from the twilight knoll to the darkling cave to partake of their evening meal, and then of their strange and uncouth repose. The solitary form which here and there appeared with this object at the opening of the huts was presently relieved by figures starting up from the heather around or from hillocks which hitherto had screened them ; the children were wilder than the

parent who called them forth, their hair streaming upon the air, and their naked feet gracefully and elastically springing from the turf, of which they seemed to be the offspring.

However much the mind and character may fall short of the school of nature, the human figure seems formed to fill up the landscape, and the inhabitants of any one definite nation seem by movement and attitude to bear out the forms of that nation in the hill or on the wold. Mr. Randall pursued his course towards one of these strange groups which had attracted his attention, and which upon his approach immediately seemed to undergo a change in their position and object, as if marshalling for a meditated campaign upon the benighted traveller. The next instant the whining voices of children struck his ear, as a number of them leaping up from the dark ground, sprung towards him soliciting alms, while the woman approaching in the rear of the children chid in half angry, half humorous voice their insolence in soliciting what they well enough knew she would grant no supper or sleep had it been unbegged ; and with a countenance and the good manner so belonging to Ireland, she requested Mr. Randall to come in at that late hour to her hovel. Thinking that in doing this he might best perhaps further the object of his search, he consented.

In spite of the absorption of the traveller's interest in the subject matter of his inquiry, he was too much struck with the peculiarity of the scene into which he entered not for the moment to become interested in examining it. Having by the strange mixture of courtesy

and rudeness in the manners of his hostess been induced to enter her savage-looking hostel, he found himself in a more capacious apartment than he should have imagined from the exterior appearance. He soon became conscious of a great oppression to his breathing caused by the exclusion of air, owing to the troop, which with loud and vociferous cries and strange gesticulations were following the woman into the hovel, having blocked up the entrance. This sensation for a moment alarmed him, but it was immediately relieved on the admission of the full party into the subterranean hovel.

"You will not, may be, like the darkness," said the shrill voice of the woman. "The English have a love for light and air; but we in this part can thrive as well in the dark and in suffocation as we can out upon the moorland and in the heath. But stay a moment," said she, and as she spoke her movements showed that she was about to do something which would free Mr. Randall from his difficult position. Meantime he became painfully conscious that he was closely surrounded by numbers of beings whose object upon his person he was unable to divine in the murky condition of the air. Various touches with fingers and now with the palms of the hand, sometimes with the end of sticks and other invisible instruments, followed by a stifled laugh, or even occasionally by a loud cry made him intuitively place his hand upon his pockets and place himself in the attitude of self-defence, if such should be necessary.

But in the course of a few moments a high thin

flare of yellow light began to fill the hovel with a dense smoke, and illumining something like twenty faces, he to his astonishment found that he was in a subterranean cavern, roofed and walled with heather in the midst of what appeared to be a whole tribe of Irish peasantry. The scene was in the highest degree picturesque. The flare of yellow light was surmounted by its column of grey smoke, which rising like a pillar towards the roof of the cave, gradually descended in elegant wreaths upon the lower portions of the room, like the light volutes of an Ionic pillar, showing how the most perfect forms of art have been borrowed from the original shapes of nature. The light bursting from the heather fire shone with ruddy glow upon a number of children, ranging from sixteen down to three years old, every one of whom seemed to be born to cut some important figure in a picture of Murillo's; and by their ragged hair, beaming eyes, pallid faces, strange dress, and savage appearance, mixed with the gracefulness of attitude, proclaimed them to be at once belonging to one race in the world, and that the Irish.

The sudden burst of the light upon their countenances seemed like the work of magic; and when Mr. Randall found that every eye was fixed upon himself as the flame illumined also his own face and countenance, he shrunk with some alarm from the company into which he had fallen. Behind this group of children the tall figure of the woman came out in the flare. She was about the age of fifty, and showed marks of having once been handsome. The grey locks

that found their escape from under the rough coiffage of her head-dress tended to add to the savage elegance of her appearance, while her dress combined a strange mixture of ragged beggary and tastefulness of arrangement. Her feet were bare as were also her arms. As the light suddenly broke upon her, she was in the act of breaking a stick from the faggot to throw upon the flame. The smoke which by this time had reached the group of figures became painfully oppressive to Mr. Randall, producing the feelings of suffocation, which his hostess perceiving, called away two or three of the children who were still hovering near the entrance.

A hundred questions followed from his eager hosts, and after some perplexity as to their position in life, and their relationship to the woman, he ascertained that instead of being in the centre of a family group, he had been introduced into a kind of Irish boarding-house or lodging-house, where the woman herself undertook to feed with all the necessaries of life—which consisted of oat-cake, bread and water every day, whiskey twice a year, and meat on Christmas-day—the whole company before him, who were gathered and gleaned from every hill-side round, a sort of Roman asylum of beggars, riff-raff orphans, desolate and homeless, on condition that they would defraud successfully every one of the luckless travellers from England by excursion train or otherwise, who, visiting the Pass of Dunloe, might think that it added to the enterprise or the chivalry of their summer excursion to have been beset by genuine Irish children, and to have been willingly robbed of pence upon so historic an occasion. Their

profits were generally large, especially through the season ; and though their fare was of the rudest, and their mode of lying at night of the roughest description, —for their bed had been pointed out to him, composed of heaps of dry heather and a little hay,—few children in the world could bear more the appearance of reality and energy. His questions, which by this time had convinced his auditors that he was entertained, as well as surprised at the condition of social life of which he had become the unexpected spectator, induced them to point to a corner of the cavern which he had not yet noticed, where upon the ground, four old women, apparently octogenarians, lay asleep, while between them was outstretched a colossal sow, which also lay slumbering, every now and then moving its head with a grunting accompaniment, indicative of the perfect repose it felt alike in the dreams of night, as of the forage of the day.

This seemed to complete the scene to Mr. Randall. Upon a further inquiry he discovered that these aged ladies were taken in as shareholders in the prolific enterprise, and received their own portion of the profits drawn from the wayfarers between Killarney and Dunloe, on condition of their showing themselves during a certain portion of the day at the door of the cavern with their hair streaming on the air, and their antique figures dressed in a kind of gipsy fashion, that made every cockney go back declaring he had seen Meg Merrilies, and attracted many an artist to pitch his campstool upon the neighbouring hillock to sketch the picturesque forms, and gladly to exchange half-a-crown or

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three shillings for the advantage of slipping into his portfolio drawings so true from an original, and not very usual nature.

But however much the scene might strike on Mr. Randall's eye in the picturesque point of view,—and he was by no means one who would not appreciate this aspect—his own mind was occupied in other thoughts. He entered the hovel with the intention of making such inquiries from his hostess, as might lead to the discovery of the object of his search. Having accepted the offer of a heap of heather on which he was to sit near the fire, and taken some of the oat-cake which was thrust upon him by the children, each child having taken his position at various angles from the fire with the light beaming upon their pale and impatient countenances, while their hands were rapidly employed in tearing up the turf from the ground, Mr. Randall opened his conversation.

“You seem to be very comfortable here, good woman,” said he, “and have rather a large family to look after.”

“Ay, sir,” was the ready answer, “we have our season, like the big folk; and were it not for that, we should fare but ill through the dreary hours of the winter. Few are the passengers that Killarney sends us through the bleak months of frost and snow; and hard it is to keep the children alive through that period: but they work hard through the summer months, and it is not for an Irishwoman to send them out upon the bleak world when their harvest is run out. They have their home and their fire, such as it is, and their bit of

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virtuals through winter time and summer time. It is a rough scene you have come into, I am thinking, your reverence; but it is one that belongs to old Ireland from Galway cliffs right away to county Wicklow."

"It is indeed," said Mr. Randall, "but are there many families who live in this way?"

"Many, bless your Reverence," said the woman; "there are at least twenty between this and the middle of Dunloe who live in this way."

"What!" said Mr. Randall, "as many as twenty, with numbers of children like these?"

"Ay, and there are," said the woman; "there is one cabin where they number at least fifty under its roof."

"And who are they?" said Mr. Randall.

"Oh, the children of those who are dead and gone, the fatherless and the orphan," said the woman; "and God never will desert the home that protects and shelters them. It is a blessing to have the orphan under one's roof, and to let the fatherless partake of one's bread."

"True enough," said Mr. Randall, "very true; but are the Irish the only people who live near the Pass of Dunloe?"

"Oh, and there is the factor, my lord's agent," said the woman, "who lives in a small house towards the lake; but he is not here in the winter time, for they say that he is afraid of the bullet, or the Priest's curse," said she, lowering her voice, and looking towards the doorway, as if she half imagined that what she said would be conveyed to the ears of some one who with

no peculiar softness or tenderness of heart ruled the destinies of these people.

"And that will be all," said the woman musingly, "saving the hotel keepers at the Victoria and the Killarney inns; and they do not fash themselves much about us poor folk, but I believe would rather if they could drive us off the moor or the common altogether."

"I suppose, my good woman," said Mr. Randall, "they have cause enough to wish they were not such near neighbours when hungry times come, and so many idle little hands are released from the work of begging and soliciting alms."

"And they may wish it," said the woman, suddenly, showing that her temper was rising, "but they would sooner banish the Torque mountain from its place, as banish the children of the Emerald Isle from their own homes in the cabin and the hovel. No, no, your Reverence, Ireland knows and loves her own; and she will reject the strangers, and hurl them into the great ocean, rather than allow one of her own children to sink beneath the hand of the oppressor."

"My good woman," said Mr. Randall, "I did not intend to annoy or offend you; but passing by the question of the factor, can you assure me that there is no one else who lives in this neighbourhood at all, except the Irish families you have described?"

"There is Father O'Connor," said the woman, "who lives two miles out, in the village; but little is it he has to do with Dunloe; and a big gentleman, but small is the favour that he shows to the inhabitants of the pass, or the poor, in the days of frost and cold."

"And that is all?" said Mr. Randall, looking disappointed, and gazing at the fire.

"No, mother," said one of the boys, "may be the gentleman means the daft lady who walks backwards and forwards to Killarney for the post."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Randall.

"If your Reverence means her—but that cannot be."

"Speak, good woman, speak," said Mr. Randall, "and tell me who it is that yonder child was speaking of."

"He but spoke of one whom we call Constance in these parts," said the woman; "I do not know who she is, but they say she is not so sharp or so good as she might be. She came to take up her abode among us now many long months since, and that with her child; but who the child's father was, God, or some one worse, knows," sinking her voice into a whisper as she spoke, as if the very reference to the crime of other days might evoke some figure from the land of the dead to rebuke or punish her for her daring.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Randall, "and why is she considered not so sharp as she should be?"

"I cannot tell," said the woman, "she always speaks very civil to me and all my bairns, and never is the rough word or the foolish one that I ever heard drop from her lips; but still they will have it that she is daft, and that some great trouble has broken down her mind. Some speak of troubles—but it does not do for a decent woman to mention such to you—brought upon her by her own misguided folly in days gone by; and some speak of the cruelty and rudeness of a husband

who lives in foreign parts ; and some say that the reason why she walks so quickly and sadly now more often than she did to Killarney town is because her only child has been taken from her to the great war, and as they tell us, some think he is dead and gone, because she ever comes from Killarney with no letter in her hand ; and as the folks say, she looks sadder and sadder every day, poor thing ! That post-office is a wicked thing ;” said the woman, shaking her head ; “it brings far more trouble than it brings good news to any one.”

“Where does this woman live ?” said Mr. Randall. “I wish to see her, if I can, immediately.”

“To see her,” said the woman with astonishment, “it is impossible ; she lives in a small cottage under Dunloe which she rents of the factor ; but she would not admit such as you to the dwelling, I know her ; she often steps in here upon her morning walk, and when her son was with her they used frequently to come in here and enjoy the talk of my tribe ; but, poor thing, she has never come in since she lost her boy in the war, and she scarce now speaks a word to me as she passes by. I am afraid there is something wrong about her situation ; it is strange that she has no one in the wide world to care for her.”

These words uttered at random by the Irish woman sunk into the mind of Mr. Randall. “My good woman,” said he, “I should wish very much to speak to this person whom you call Constance, for I imagine I may tell her some news of her son.”

“What, have you come from the war ?” said the

woman in astonishment, "and can you tell us news of the battle and Feergus O'Blaney, who went from Dunloe Pass, and Michael O'Connor sure who was one of my own tribe, and used to sit on yonder stack of heather higher than all the brats, and who against my will and without my knowledge too went down and enlisted at the Cove of Cork, and have you seen him?"

"Michael O'Connor," said a number of small voices, "and have you seen poor Michael? and is it he that has fought the battle of Alma as they tell us? and is it he that will take Sebastopol? he said before he went that he should be in the forlorn hope, and that he knew well enough that there was not a Russian bayonet that had been forged that had got his heart's blood written upon it."

"My poor children," said Mr. Randall, "I have come from the seat of war, but I have neither seen Feergus nor Michael, and if I had I fear I should be but little able to give you much information considering the vast numbers that pass by the eye of any one in those dreadful scenes. But," said he, resuming the former subject, "it would be impossible to see this woman to-night; could you, my good woman, allow me to see her to-morrow with you? and will you take me to her house?"

"Bless your reverence," said the woman, "and I will; but what can such as you want with one in her position?"

"Never mind that, my good woman," said Mr. Randall; "if you can let me see her, do; for I believe

that I have something to say to her of the first importance."

"Then there is not one from Dingle Bay to Cork," said his hostess, "who needs more words of comfort and encouragement than she does; and I will not be the one to hold you back from the chance of a word with her. Bide here to-night, and mark me, Michael, make the bed in the corner, the best of the heather shake down, and bring out the blanket and the sheets from yonder chest, and make the gentleman's bed as canny as it can be."

To Mr. Randall's astonishment a dozen of the children sprung from their places and rushing towards a large oak chest carved in a grotesque fashion which he had not yet noticed brought from it some sheets and blankets which lay concealed there. Suspicion crossed his mind of the mode in which these articles had been procured, and that suspicion finding expression in his countenance drew from the woman an account of how they were got through perfectly honest means, she having invested a portion of her savings in articles which might when emergency offered convert her cabin into a hostel, and turn for herself a few silver coins in the place of the copper ones which she usually received.

Mr. Randall threw himself upon his new couch, and long before sleep visited his anxious mind and wakeful eye the group around him had sunk one by one to their quiet and refreshing slumber. The scene was remarkable. As the red embers of the expiring fire every now and then crackling and emitting a shower of sparks,

and sending forth their ruddy light gleamed on the sleeping countenances of boys and girls thrown together in wild disorder upon heaps of heather ; in the corner the old crones still maintained their undisturbed repose. The hostess, having seen everything in order before she retired, had thrown herself down close under the sloping roof of the cabin, and was as soon locked in the arms of sleep as was the smallest child present. Mr. Randall's mind ruminated over the long past, and what his conduct should be if he should be successful in having discovered Raymond's mother, his own wife. A thousand hesitating thoughts passed his mind. The universal view of the world of a woman's sin is that it has no forgiveness in time, if it has in eternity, and when she has once fallen into the fault which her own infirm nature may lead her into so sadly, that she is past the boundary of hope ; while the sinful nature of man leads him into the commission of the same crimes too often, for which he is not only entirely forgiven but sometimes finds his fault passed lightly over by the society in which he moves.

This rule of the world and of society in such apparent contradiction to the rules of the Gospel weighed on the mind of Mr. Randall. Should he break it through ? Was it consistent with the mind of Scripture, and with that Gospel which he was bound to teach, to reject in this world the penitent from the restoration to the lost place at last ? and was it criminal after years have rolled away to heal the broken heart, and bind up the wound of one who having sought God by prayer and penitential tears had reason to hope that the words had been ut-

tered in Heaven, if not upon earth, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace?" Shall God tell one whom He had received to "go in peace," and a mortal himself frail and infirm, a sinner in the very line in which she had been of whom he was thinking, refuse to receive to peace and to reconciliation with himself one for whom the place in Eternity might, for aught he knew, be prepared?

Still the strong convictions of society at large, the powerful prestige of its rules and conventional ideas, the strong hold which they had upon the mind of Mr. Randall made him hesitate as to the course that he should pursue. Then came before his mind fleeting by the thin but lovely shadow—the form of his boy as he lay stricken down on the battlefield on the heights of the Alma, and the same form of that boy as he lay in the Russian prison; his spirit so prepared for Heaven by the careful teaching and prayers of his mother, and his voice so touchingly, so really, so holily pleading in his dying moments with the father that had forsaken him, for the mother that had watched each footstep of his life, and guarded and guided every holy feeling of his opening character. Could it be the duty of Mr. Randall still to close the door of pardon upon her, to turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of his dying boy now, he believed, a saint in Heaven; and not to repair that domestic breach which had been opened perhaps as much by his own culpable neglect and worldliness, and his desertion of his home, and neglect of his unfortunate wife, as it had been by her sinful practices, by her desire for the world, and trivial enjoyments.

His thoughts gradually melted off into more strong and keen sensations as wakefulness glided down into the borderland over which the twilight hovers between waking and sleeping ; and the vivid impressions of that transitory hour presently sunk into the deep calm dreams of the night in the Irish Cabin.

At morning, early, all were astir, and Mr. Randall himself performing as well as he could his hasty toilet in the presence of so many spectators, refreshed himself with the meal which the activity and the hospitality of his hostess had procured for him before he was awake, consisting of oatmeal cake and fresh milk, and prepared to accompany her to the dwelling to which she had promised to take him when he was suddenly summoned by her cry as she stood at the cabin door, " Oh, your riverence, and here sure enough comes the very person in question : here is the poor lady starting off upon her way to Killarney, but she goes this morning with a slower step than usual, and she has set off at an earlier hour."

Mr. Randall did not take a moment to be by the side of the Irish woman, and looking in the direction to which her finger pointed, he saw coming down between two high hills that sloped from the dark chasm of the valley the figure of a woman. The footstep was apparently somewhat slow and lingering, her head was bowed down as if her eyes were fixed upon the ground, while her mind was occupied in some deep and apparently painful contemplation as she walked along. The hill partially concealed her, but as she approached the cabin she hastened her footsteps, and seemed unwilling

to attract any observation. Her face was concealed by the bonnet she wore, and the shawl that covered her figure so completely enveloped her as to make it difficult for any one, even for those who had known her best, to recognize her. But to Mr. Randall's eye there did not need a moment to make the recognition of her whom his boy had described as living on the daily hope of being pardoned, and of finding an answer of peace to her intercessions and prayers to God. But feeling it was better not to make himself known in such a moment and in such a scene, he stood against the entrance of the cavern, watching the traveller on her fruitless journey to Killarney.

Well he knew that that journey was fruitless; well he knew that she went hoping to see the handwriting of one whose form lay cold and silent, and sinking to dust beneath the soil of a Russian prison. He painfully contrasted in his mind the two scenes, the one of which he had been conscious, and the one which she imagined. Before her eye floated the form of her gallant boy, fighting perhaps side by side with the heroes of the British army, winning for her glory and the means of support in her future days; still borne up by the fallacious hope that at the post-office at Killarney she would find some token of his affection, some promise of a bright and a happy future. He but saw that same boy, pale and sinking on the battle-field, the blood weltering in a crimson tide from the wounds that gaped on his breast and side; his hair bedabbled with his blood, his head resting on his father's bosom, while his wandering mind had taken

flight to the hills of Killarney, and his mother's breast ; he but saw that boy sinking on the pillow of dying, —the lamp that burnt solitarily on the table of the prison-chamber,—the arm that lay outstretched to grasp his new-found father's hand, and his last words beseeching mercy and forgiveness for that lorn being who now was going on the fruitless, though oft-repeated journey to the town.

Oh ! the varied scenes that range themselves in a single city—in a single village. Oh ! the contrast between the gay visitors of an excursion train—the merry shout and laugh—the astonished and delighted expression of admiration, as the idler or the poet rock and row upon the placid mirror of the lakes of Killarney, when seen in contrast with a form like that—all whose hopes, joys, and woes are centred in a single letter in the post-office of the haunt of fashionable and crowded resort ! Yet scarce a day in which our footsteps tread the streets of the vast metropolis, but what we jostle unwittingly against some such form as that,—but what in the mazy thread of life, we touch some tissue of woe and anguish which shades the woof of human history with as sombre and sable a colour as would that woman's mind have darkened the joys of Killarney, had it been known !

Mr. Randall's eye followed the receding figure till he could see it no more ; and then, wishing farewell for the present to his hostess, and promising to return before evening, he resumed his walk across the wold, determined to explore the far-famed beauties of Dunloe, in order that he might await a good opportunity for his interview with Constance.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SHAFTS OF WAR.

THE sorrows of war are many. In its wake follows a grim procession, and ever has. If in ordinary times and countries these woes are many, how terrible they must be in lands where the conscription reigns supreme. When in the evening the father has returned to his home to cheer and be cheered by kindly voices and old smiles of greeting, has formed one of the mysterious shadow-pictures on the wall and pressed to his lips the laughing cheek of his last-born child; and to-morrow he is summoned to bid good-bye to them all for twenty weary years, in which the peril of death will track his daily path, and the figures of home will grow monthly dimmer and paler and more distant as years roll between him and them and hundreds of miles divide the father from his child; dimmer and paler! yes, but may-be sweeter still, until wounded and dying on the battle-field he remembers them with his last conscious thought as the dear old company which still follows him into the realm of shades. No wonder Russia has to use the manacle and fetter to retain the recruit and the horrors of the knout to lash out of the heart the yearning to escape. "Love is stronger than death," and the torrent of human love rolls on too madly for ordinary limits to restrain.

Among the sorrows which like draped figures in a funeral follow the track of war as we have known in the course of the present campaigns, have been the desolate home, the mind broken down by even reading, still

more by contemplating its horrors, the sadness which ever drops its unheaving folds over the unprepared death, the widow childless, and the orphan with no parent but "the British public."

Even in our little group the arrows of the war had shot fast and far. Many hearts were stricken already in one brief year, and even yet the quiver was not empty; there were more shafts still to be shot at a venture.

There was Jessy—the frail sensitive mind overthrown; the reason dethroned from the seat of government. Poor girl! she had perhaps been through life too much inclined to yield to feelings—but it had its end now.

And Mr. Seymour, good man, he said little about it. He talked much as usual, about the news from the Crimea, and the chances of peace, and his recollections of Pitt and Fox, and what the village used to be when he remembered it a common; and he was cheerful and called from his door-step to "Loraine, I'm glad to see you; all well, I hope, at the hall; that's a pretty little chesnut you are riding, nevertheless it has some of the features of Sydney Smith's 'Calamity.'" He used to walk by himself daily to Mrs. Mulso's and be to the eye of footmen and Mrs. Thorburn and the spaniels much what he was; but it was his way, his heart was stricken home, and when he went down the passage to Jessy's room—but of that by-and-by.

There was Mrs. Loraine; she would see no one like a visitor—sat all day in her boudoir, seldom read, never worked, talked to every one of the horrors of war,

had Leonard's miniature by Richmond always lying on the table, and used to say to Maxwell as he came along the passage, "Maxwell, my love, is your papa downstairs? I wish he would not take such long rides." War had done its work there.

And there was Mrs. Mulso, poor old lady—you do not like her, reader; but she is one of the great family of man, and has her parallel in many a home and hearth, she cannot help her peculiarity. There she sat, in that little room upstairs, with the brown silk-lined cabinet and the old china figures with their blue and pink and gilt. Hamlet always lay open, but she did not recite Ophelia quite so much; it was all so *real* now. We only look at pictures and recite poetry which describe sorrows in proportion as they are far away from us.

Henry VI. was all the fashion with her now, and she used to find herself saying aloud, almost to monotony as she arranged her head gear with her hand,

"Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not a hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery?
As yet it doth, a thousand fold it doth."

"The shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leathern bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicacies,
When care, mistrust, and treason wait upon him."

Mrs. Mulso looked on Shakspeare as a safety valve for everything. His was the golden key which unlocked her heart and let out its pent-up sorrows.

Poor Mrs. Mulso had felt the shaft of war.

Then there were Dennis and his wife and little Jane; they showed nothing different; yet those who knew the cottage and its habits well could have told that a son was absent from the hearth, and a brother from the cottage door; and that that old English feeling still burnt like a red ember, however low, deep down in the Saxon heart, of making the sorrows of the master the sorrows of the man; and Master Leonard's death was felt well nigh as keenly in the cottage of the bailiff as in the mansion of the parent. Thoroughly English that!

Nor were its shafts expended yet even in our little circle of friends. Mrs. Thorburn had to think in secret, and when no one knew it, sigh over the feeling that there were scenes of sorrow she longed to be in and to exert herself for, and yet that she of all was the one least called into active, energetic play. Nothing is harder for a person like that than a luncheon table at two o'clock with a cold chicken, a jelly, and a little fruit, some biscuits, Madeira, and nothing warm, and to have it for their *duty* to be there day after day, when they long to be at Scutari, or in the streets of Sebastopol; is desperately trying: and above all, to have to sit opposite good Mrs. Mulso, and cut off the liver wing for her, and hear her low murmurings of complaining woe, and see Mr. Mulso walk in with his stick, halfway through luncheon, and sit down sideways on the chair, and draw the jelly towards him—eat it and go; and—Well, that was Mrs. Thorburn's war-trial, and trial enough it was when Cicely *was gone* to Scutari,

and the widow and—everybody of energy, life, and reality.

Ah that luncheon hour! it is the coldest chilliest hour of all the twenty-four. English utterly! as much as Dennis' father was. "Die out anyday, but don't rust out;" die at the Redan, but don't rust at luncheon; die of the hospital fever, but don't die of an old lady's daily luncheon temper. No grandeur on earth can make up for it. No! these are the true sufferers—so after all Mrs. Thorburn suffered most of all—and a great many ladies are doing the same now in England, young ladies unmarried and old ones widows, and some who are not, and—but of that war shaft enough.

Cicely perhaps suffered less by the war than any. It brought her out and crushed nothing—not even her collar. She was as neat, as decisive, as piercing, as determined, as upright, as shortsighted as ever. But more sympathizing, more kind, more unselfish than before; she was at everybody's side—mother and father, though her delight was to be with her father, for he never said one word about the war or Leonard, and talked more than ever about dahlias, Tasmanian cedars, and the last new invention in harness; and her mother talked of nothing else but the war and Leonard, with her shawl round her shoulder, and her head leaning on her hand. Then Cicely after having comforted her father by talking of harness, and Mrs. Dennis by talking of cleanliness, and Mr. Seymour by talking of George III., and her mother by talking of Leonard—went to Scutari, so the war brought her into harbour.

And there was another whom the war had not done

much harm to, Maxwell. Maxwell was altogether altered; as if he had walked over a bridge which spanned a whole stream of life. True, he had just turned fifteen, which makes a wonderful change in many, but that could hardly account for the alteration—so silent, so full of his own thoughts as he stood on the rug, with his back to the fire, and literally if any one made the very joke to him which was made a year ago, or six months ago and brought out a peal of laughter, it was now received with perfect gravity and profound silence and a frown, till Mrs. Loraine said, "Maxwell, my dear, do you not feel well?"

"Oh yes, mamma," and he went out whistling.

Then he always used of old to be talking of Jessy—but now he never did, and if any one else spoke of her he instantly left the room; then he never used to kiss his sisters, but now he always kissed Cicely before breakfast, though he looked so grave about it, that it gave anything but a happy impression. Then too he was sometimes found in a corner reading poetry—not Wordsworth or Tennyson, true—but Byron, and that was something; but then he would read "Parisina," and Cicely wished him to read "The Corsair," and his mother had some recollections that "The Hebrew Melodies" was the right thing to read, or "Don Juan," she was not quite sure which, for she had but glimmerings from her young days of either, and she had not read much since. But she could not be very far wrong in recommending any work by the author of "The Hebrew Melodies."

And then there was Alice. The war touched her

also; in its own way found her out in the school-room, poor child, in many a strange way; first the governess was so terribly prosy and melancholy; she always had been, but now it was worse than ever; she always saw something in everything which happened. Sebastopol and every movement was a fulfilment of the Apocalypse; and what with showing the evident fulfilments, anticipating the future and explaining the reasons each week why the surmises of last week had proved a profound failure, poor Alice's French and German and "Life of Marie de Medicis," were at a sad discount. Then the governess was so cross, so sublime, so dignified, as if every movement in the war had a particular concern with *her*; just as we always feel that *we* are *ourselves* the personal friends and confidants of Richard I., and Queen Elizabeth in the Talisman and Kenilworth, and with every hero of a novel in proportion as he is high and noble. Her walks were so long, so silent, always to the high road, along it and back again. Then Maxwell did not play nearly so much as he did with Alice, did not plague her and bully her half as much as he did; and this made Alice sad, for she always loved it dearly.

Oh, yes, the war shaft found its way into the school-room. War did not shoot past little Grace without touching her. Poor little gentle, thoughtful, loving Grace with all her wondering affection for Jessy Seymour, and which Jessy, with her own wild, fervent devotion used to love so. Poor Grace; she too in her walk to the Rectory to know how Jessy was, had her own share of grief from the quiver of the war.

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And there was that little room down the passage in the Rectory to which daily at ten o'clock—But we will of that another time.

Then, too, there was one more, and I have been all this time reaching her. Constance Randall; the shafts of war hit her right home—home to the very heart, as I will now go on to tell, now that I have bound all my floating, Sibylline leaves of story into one idea, one volume of history. In a war kindred interest makes us all one; and there is no kindred interest greater than that of war. We never felt so much at home with multitudes as we do now. Never; the war has made us all one, and given means enough for many threads to a tale.

Poor Constance; there indeed the war had shot its arrows home. The best narrative of her life and quiet unknown sufferings will be from her diary; some leaves of which I now transcribe. You are shocked at printing a living person's diary. Well,—but there you will find no reason to be uneasy. "Then," you say, "Constance is dead! and all the consequence to a tale!" Well, she is dead, and it is that death and the way that led to it, of which I am the annalist. Otherwise you should never have heard of Constance's diary. Mr. Randall found her diary in a small box which lay put away in her cabin. "But then," you say, "Mr. Randall too had nothing but her diary to go by, and never got that longed-for conversation with her."

Let us wait and see.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DIARY.

HERE is her diary—at least part of it. Diaries! strange, real, powerful things, when self talks to self, and self sits opposite self, to be looked at, examined, analysed,—judged; so full of reality and out-pourings, we rush to our diary when our hearts are full, and there is no one to tell, or no one we can or will talk to, and we utter our woes and anxieties like a poet writing his stanzas; weeping over them and laughing at their beauty, and then tearing them up and scattering them to the winds; only happy to have given to words our feelings. Dante's diary is his *Divina Comedia*, and Tennyson's is "In Memoriam." And sometimes men paint diaries on canvas, and tell self to self more than to the public. What a diary in those Danby sunsets or Redgrave's tall cool green trees; what a diary in Millais' "Hugonot," or Hunt's "Stray Lamb." There they are telling of such living, heaving, soaring feelings which must be told to some one, or somehow be told to self.

What a diary in many a "Crucifixion," and "Calvary," and that Francia in the National Gallery! How day after day the painter wrote his heart's love and anguish and hope and prayer in each line and tone of colour and sorrowful or gladdening lineament.

Is not Magdalen Tower at Oxford a diary, or the Choir of Amiens, or the west-front of Strasburg a diary, an architect's diary each of them.

"Feb. 2. I reached Killarney to-day with my child—my precious Raymond. My father refuses to receive me or to see me. I went to the village of my old home, and wrote from Mrs. Cripps' cottage, my old nurse. Shall I ever forget those long hours when I waited for the answer—that long afternoon and evening? When it was twilight I went out to visit the old churchyard. How many scenes of my childhood came back to me—all, all of them softening, humbling, mellowing. I knelt by an old rusty rail which surrounded two flat gravestones, broken and mossy. I saw again the name which I remember so well having read on Sunday when a child, 'Sir Silas Silius.'

"Nettles grew as they used among the rails and the gravestones. The church clock struck 'seven.' Oh, what words, what home-telling words its dear old chimes seemed to say. I longed that it would go on for an hour, each bell was full of music to my soul—but all humbling, soothing, mellowing.

"So the past always is—the past! what do not people lose who have *no past*. Oh, parents, you have done a work alone—a great work who give *a past* to your children. It is a long sweet background full of quiet light and pensive evening-hues against which every scene and figure in after life stands out relieved. I needed these lights; for I went back to Mrs. Cripps', and the good old lady's manner made me feel sure there was bad news, she was so kind. Threescore years and ten and five more to that can afford to be kind to all. It has seen too much of life to take strong lines of censure or of approval. What repose there is in the

aged, in the grey hair! such forgiveness, sympathy, moderation!

"But the answer; I will not dwell on that—the bitter, bitter words—my father would not see me— forbade me the house—he said—But I will not dwell on it. 'It is God, let Him do what seemeth Him good.' I determined to leave the neighbourhood and come here. I left dear kind old Mrs. Cripps, and I reached Killarney with my child yesterday. I shall never forget the utter desolation of the first arrival at that miserable town; the solitariness I felt among crowds, and the desolation amid hundreds.

"But my boy did everything for me, watched my every movement, anticipated every want. Oh, my God! I tremble when I think it might be still in Thy inscrutable Providence to take him too. I cannot put down the words of that sentence—oh, let this be my prayer as it has been so long: 'Do what Thou wilt with me, only save me at last.' 'What Thou wilt—.' Can I say that now, now that I have found how much Raymond is to me? can I? or is it that I like the rhythm of the old words? Yes, I think I can and I do say it again.

"We came out to the pass of Dunloe, where through the kindness of the agent who knew something of my father I have got a little home; hardly more than a hovel—but it is my own, my own—my home—for where is home but with those we love and the working for and living for them?

"I have two little rooms, if I can call them rooms. The high hills of Dunloe are over us, and the gloomy grandeur of the pass opens out behind. The far dis-

tant moors stretching along dotted here and there with huts ; and the abundance of wild flowers, which I hear there are in summer along the edges of the pass, make it very beautiful as a home. My precious boy has been helping me in arranging our new home ; his cheerful manner and kind loving eye following me wherever I go make my sorrows indeed lighter. Oh, my God, grant in Thy mercy that in this new and secluded home I may seek and know Thee more and more, and baring the depth of my own character and my past sinfulness may more truly repent and take with greater patience and acquiescence Thy chastisements. I know how deeply they are deserved. How far more I should have if I had what I ought. 'It is of Thy mercy I am not consumed.'"

"March 2. Becoming settled in my new home. I have had a long ramble with Raymond along the pass and up the hill which leads to the lovely view of the three lakes. What delight it was to me to watch the noble figure of my child rushing forward to climb hill on hill, and rock on rock, and then return to my side with his face glowing with his exertion, and his hair streaming on the wind ; to see his eye look at me as if his soul were really, wholly, and all my own, and to look forward to the day when my sorrows will be to a great degree chased away by hearing of his success in life, and perhaps of his doing the work of his country and his fellow-creatures boldly and honourably. Oh, that will indeed be a return but too great for all I have suffered—*suffered!* why should I speak so? as if I did not feel it just. How good, oh my God, I

well know, and how far more than I could imagine that Thou wouldst ever grant me that I should have him to be my companion in my otherwise loveless life. I know I sinned grievously, awfully, foully, an outcast from society, and once an outcast from heaven. My boy is my one treasure, my 'alabaster box,' my all and perhaps—oh, can I bear the thought or the sentence, perhaps even that alabaster box must be offered to Him. If such should be, may I have the grace to do it. But after such sins, such falls, such a life of sinful indulgence and vanity and violation of conscience; how blessed to have him, something to love dearly. More than that, he loves me; Raymond loves me with his whole, whole heart. He tells me everything, flies to me in every trouble, brings everything he finds to show me, thinks all day how he can spare and ease me, he has no other idea of me than as his mother. What can I want more? I have fallen from my position, and this is left me. To be his object, his refuge, his comfort, still to be his home. Though my own sin has broken up his once fair and beautiful home, and given him but a hut instead; I hear him say he wants no more than to be with me, and live for me through after life. Oh, how great a cause of gratitude."

"March 27. Been to Killarney with Raymond, a lovely spring day. We took the boat for 'the meeting of the waters.' How lovely that shooting arrow-flight of waters was which shot under the bowing trees into the further lake. Raymond so enjoyed it. He seemed to delight in having his home fixed in this scenery. He begins to be quite a mountain boy; he talks of going

up the Torque mountain. He is full of enterprise. We went to the Post Office at Killarney—that old Post Office; how accustomed and yet how sad it is. No letter—no answer from my father to my earnest appeal not for myself, but for my child, the innocent victim of so much sorrow in circumstances of life. And no news, no intelligence of *him*—him. Oh, has he quite, quite forgotten me? will he never see me—speak to me again—will my poor Raymond never see his father—never utter that word which is so embalmed in the memories of thousands? And that all my own fault. Still if he will not see *me*, will he not see his child?

“May 3. Raymond is asleep and I am alone. No sound except the rill of waters along the rocks and ferns of the pass. As usual we have been in one of our long rambles and been visiting one of the cabins. I felt as if I belonged to these wild people, and had a kindred feeling with them. I am much depressed—much. I feel I do not enough feel my sin, my guilt, the more I look at it, the more vile it seems. I fear I am too much inclined to look to the day when my punishment will be relieved, taken off me; instead of only praying that I may have grace to bend humbly before God all the days of my life. I am always thinking how I can right myself, how I can recover a little self-esteem—how I can resume some of the forsaken feelings of old days. But this is all wrong, my whole aim must be to be accepted when I meet Him—*accepted*—yes, what a thought, ‘be accepted by Him.’ Oh, how beautiful that passage seemed to me the other day when I was reading it, which speaks of Jacob

meeting Esau ; and he feared the interview after so much provocation, and before he crossed the stream, he sent forward a present from his flocks and herds, and he charged the servants, saying, 'On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, Behold thy servant is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present which goeth before me, and afterward will I see his face ; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him and himself lodged that night in the company.'

“‘That night’—my night of dying : before I cross the cold dark stream to meet Him, I will ‘appease Him with the present which shall go before me’—my penitence, my utter penitence : my whole heart and life, all I have which He sees good to take from me ; yes, all, even you, my precious, my beloved child. The present ‘which goeth before me,’ yes, I like that thought. Peradventure He will accept of me.

“June 10. Been a long walk with Raymond towards Dingle Bay—the country is so lovely, so completely natural and Irish, and the people are so warm-hearted and earnest ; there is a good deal of comfort in them, yet there is no heart like that of those you love—your own. If they are cold and silent, what matters a speaking world ? You need a refuge, a home to run into, a harbour, and none but your own can be that, as they only know all the secret history of your life and disposition ; a warm world outside makes home colder if warmth is not there. Oh would I could apply the same principle to God, and feel heartily that all is desolate if He is not forgiving ; all cold if no fire

burns from His pardoning love. Raymond grows every day in beauty, energy, and strength of character. What is his future to be? I sometimes feel, though I scarcely dare face the thought, that he ought not to grow up here. I have been continually to Killarney, but no letter ever, none—none from my father, not even about my poor boy; none, too, about *him*. Yet after all, why should Raymond not grow up here? All here is wild and noble, beautiful and grand; what can more suit a high-minded, noble boy? why *must* he grow up with man and society with all its cramping, conventional littleness and hollowness? why should not my boy and I go forth into the wide world together? I would be quite happy in his love, in living for him—dying for him; to be the home and centre of his affections, is all I want—all. How glorious to have been the mother of a high-minded, pure, and noble child! But, oh, I must not reason so; where was I soaring to? where did I fancy myself with him? I am anticipating heaven: God may yet strip me much more; yet surely He will not see fit to take from me my child; trouble on trouble so heavy as that would be more than I could bear, and He never gives more than we can bear; and that would be more than I could—so it will not come.

“June 20. Much depressed: I cannot realize my fault. I am always trying to break away; to think I have repented, suffered enough; forgetting that a long *habitual* course of sin must have a long *habitual* course of restitutive suffering. Oh that I could view the past as I shall when I die, or rather after death,

for I think the feelings of dying are often blunted and dull, and the moral sight even then sometimes inverted. Nevertheless it is so difficult to lie quiet and passive in God's hand. Why may I not be forgiven? why will my husband never again see me, speak to me, pardon me? Is not my punishment greater than I can bear? Yet when I recollect how odious sin is to God, and how fearful one must be to Him who refuses to yield to His long-suffering and forbearance, I tremble at my restlessness. 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' then how can He behold me with such stains? because, I suppose, while I am meriting His discipline and penitential course, I am still to a certain degree refusing to shake off the bonds of my fault.

"Yes, then I must alter; I must fold my hands like those holy women I have seen in the picture over against the Sepulchre, and wait till He restores me to what I long for—peace, and joy, and freedom. Oh yes, I see it differently I think now: 'I heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.'

"How often as a child I used to think of that poor scape-goat, with the sins of the people laid upon his neck, as he lay down with his horns stretched back beneath the hand of the priest; and then his being led forth with the red fillet round his neck to the edge of the wilderness, that he might fly 'to the land not inhabited.' What an idea of the odious nature of sin in God's eye! I remember a picture of that

scape-goat lying panting and dying, alone, on the dreary shores of the Dead Sea, surrounded by nothing but the skeletons of his predecessors, and within sound of the heavy dash and plunge of the bituminous waters; the bare, bleak rocks all around, and the waste of the sand of the wilderness stretching far away. I remember how the devoted animal as he lay dying seemed oppressed with the load of his burden, as if the sins of the people pressed heavily on him; and his dying eye, large in the exhaustion of death, was gazing at the far distant streaks of departing day. While the red fillet hanging round his neck had lost its colour, and was being whitened with the long wanderings of the wearer. They used to tell me that the priest had kept the other portion of the fillet, and that when the portion which he retained became white it was thought to be a sign that the load of life was removing from the scape-goat, and that the sins which it bore away were being forgiven. As he lay dying and panting beneath the heavy burden on the far distant sand of the lonely sea, round his neck the scarlet fillet grew paler and paler, and the declaration of a pardoning God became emphatically true, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool:' which words they say were borrowed from the very image of the scape-goat. Oh what an idea of sin does this bring to mind! and how does it show the horror God has of it, that He should drive the goat to a distant land to make its terrible expiation.

“Yes; I must strive to gain a deeper view of my own

sinfulness and deeper penitence, a humbler patience, and with God's help, I will.

"July 15. Oh, how can I bear up? my God, my God, indeed Thou writest bitter things against me. I have been to Killarney—and found a letter, but not *the* letter; a letter from Mr. Lavil offering my child, my Raymond a commission; telling me that he does it urged by my father, and that it is my duty to accede, for otherwise his prospects are blighted, and he will be the innocent victim of my sins—oh, how dreadful! can I live—his life blighted! he a victim to my sinful life. Oh, my precious boy; but that you shall never be: I will bear alone like that poor being on the Dead Sea, the heavy burden as far as man can bear it. But it shall not rest on you. No, no! I will tear that selfish thought from my heart; but how can I? blighted! why, then, was it all a dream, an empty, unreal, vain dream, when I imagined that those wild hills might offer a fitting school for your young soul to prepare it for future life: I thought—what? that you and I should live in this solitude for years, and I could have done it. Oh, what could I not have done if by your side? and I thought from what I read in your affectionate eye that you, too, would have gladly remained with me—my companion, the sharer of my lot.

"August 1. I am trying to be reconciled—but, how hard. I feel as if my religion and love to God dissipated and scattered with the loss of my child. Is then religion itself only dependent on the possession of some earthly object? Does my very love to God hang on being able to see Him through the glass of His crea-

tures? What will prayer be without Raymond? I prayed with fervour because he was by my side, and I prayed for him, and *saw* him when I had done—held him—kissed him. What will reading the Bible be when he is gone? How cold and pointless! I used to read then for him, and to him, and with him. What will going to church at Killarney on Sunday morning be when he is gone? I used to have him by my side as I went to and fro; and to see how he would kneel, and attend, and remember, and associate it with me; I used to love it. What will self-discipline be without him? for him I used to deny myself, that his future might be glorious—his present happy. Oh, would I not have lived on the dryest crust? and—but was it not wrong, is it not wrong to say so? I used to think I would deny myself, crush self to induce God to bless him. I used to think He would love my child on account of my service to Him: and now he is going from me, taken from me. But is it not because I used to feel all this, and loved God for his sake, served Him but for his one sake, but for Raymond's? Then I am suffering what I deserve, it has fallen on the dearest point; it has fallen on Raymond. Is he then to suffer for my fault? Oh no, no! He need not suffer: he will be bright, and glorious, and happy. I must suffer, and I will—calmly, patiently, gratefully. He will come back to me, hereafter. Is it not wrong to have written all this? is it not rebelling, wilful, selfish? I will try and be calm: teach me, O God, to love Thee for Thine own sake, for *Thine own sake*. Teach me to say and feel, 'whom have I in heaven but Thee, and

whom upon earth can I desire in comparison of Thee?" Teach me to feel and say this: I will be quiet; I will give up Raymond without complaint, 'I will appease Him by the present which goeth before me, and afterward I will meet Him face to face; peradventure He will accept of me.'

"August 20. He is gone, and I am alone; quite solitary. My child is gone. I feel as if I had no one, nothing left to love; and he, too, has no one to love him, nothing to love. Oh, that parting hour!—oh Raymond, my child, my one dear point in life, my only comfort: shall I ever forget your eye, your look, when you left me at that sweet spot by the lake where we had so often been and talked, and read, and knelt together; I knew what you were feeling. Oh, I never yet felt desolateness before: I watched you round those trees; I strained my eyes till I saw your form no longer; I remained I know not how long, and then I went home alone to the *empty* room. The heaps of stones which you had heaped in the valley in mimicry of Sebastopol, looked like the 'stones of emptiness;' how emphatic that expression is, 'the stones of emptiness!' Suppose you are wounded, oh Raymond, what would I, would I give to be by your side: but you will be alone—alone, without a parent's hand or a parent's voice, on the dreadful, desolate battlefield; and I shall be here solitary and useless to you. Oh God, protect my child, not for my sake, for Jesus's sake—that is the right prayer. I will write no more now, for I cannot control my words, and my *written* words will be 'judged hereafter.'

“September 21, 1854. Returned again from Killarney, nothing from my precious boy; where is he? The most dreadful hauntings fill my mind: I imagine him in the battle, fighting, acting nobly as I know he would, and ever will; or perhaps wounded, dying, no one near him, lying amid heaps of the slain; no one to seek him out; one among hundreds, and yet what a one to me! I fancy him dying; the cold, dull, night; the restless head; the eye fixed wandering on the stars; his hand, which I used to hold in mine, resting on the corpse of another: oh, I cannot bear the image which with such terrible minuteness comes up before my eye. I would go there, but I know not how; I would go and seek him among the dead and dying. People sometimes speak as if they thought it noble and heroic to be able to say they would die for those they love; it is only natural, selfish, nothing more. But how wrong to complain thus: I called God long since to do anything to me, to give me any chastisement rather than let my son be lost for my great sin; and if He has thought it needful to bring my sin to remembrance more vividly by slaying my son, what a mockery my prayer was! I know how closely dust and earth have clung to the roots of my affections; and He is shaking those off to make those roots to strike in heaven. His will be done, and may I have grace to thank Him earnestly and sincerely for it. I remember hearing some one say that when we thought we needed a wing to seek the sky, and imagined when that fell wounded our life was void, for our energy and life were gone too, the broken wing but beat us back to our nest

which we should never else have sought; and that there only was the refuge for some coming peril. May I seek refuge in His resting-place—His church, and then the broken wing will be a source of gratitude. I have been feeling since Raymond went, that all the energy and life were gone from religion itself; but if the broken wing may take refuge in the nest—God's will be done."

And here came a pause in the diary; a few scattered leaves which were hard to decipher and appeared unfinished. The heart aches sometimes to go on narrating its griefs; it finds repose in utter silence.

On examining further, Mr. Randall discovered a paper which seemed to have been written quite recently. There was no date: it spoke of having been at Killarney again, and having returned with no intelligence; the words had come to have a dull, desolate ring in them; she seemed to have lost the power to give life to them, except the life of their own sorrowful weight.

And then there was a paper written yesterday, which spoke of a note received the day before, which seemed to say that the writer had gained intelligence which he was about to inquire into, and speedily send, perhaps to-morrow; and it was clear that it was of such a nature that Constance drew from it that her child was gone from her for ever in this world.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. RANDALL AND CONSTANCE.

HAVING spent some time by himself in wandering about amid the hovels on the hill-side, Mr. Randall repaired to Killarney by the usual road, impelled by the anxiety of seeking an interview and pouring some consolation into the wounded spirit.

Throughout the day the clouds had been gathering in the direction of the coast round Dingle Bay; the sultry heat had been long threatening a storm, and that inward flight of birds from the sea became one of the seldom fallible signs of the coming event. The scene became very sublime: the outlines of the hills became mingled with the rising darkness, and seemed like vast beings awaiting in stillness and awe the avenging outbreak of heaven upon some wrong done by the human race; occasional gleams of lightning glanced over the scene, and lit up the still clear mirror of the lake, and the heavy masses of foliage which seemed bending down towards it for refuge; the occasional roll of heavy thunder, showed that one of those outbreaks was impending which so peculiarly belong to mountain districts.

Mr. Randall had reached Killarney and the post-office without gaining any sight or information of the object of his search. The increasing violence of the storm which by successive peals over the distant lake and hills, was clearly advancing rapidly, made him

begin to think of how he should return to the Pass, and yet gain the end of his day's journey; he pursued his way to the head of the lake, and finding a slight lull in the storm and a break amid the clouds, and being very anxious lest he might lose altogether sight and hold of Constance, he determined on taking a boat, which waited on the edge of the lake, and in the pause of the weather to strive to gain Dunloe by a nearer and quicker route. After some little demur on the part of the boatmen from the threatening aspect of the evening, Mr. Randall set off: the distance seemed to increase as he advanced; and the dark clouds which gathered again with increasing power showed that the storm had by no means abated, but simply retired as if to gather strength for a more tremendous outbreak.

Few places are more dangerous under the influence of the storm than the lake: the narrow compass surrounded by the hills that in their ravines and gullies treasure up the wind, which bursting down on the sheet of water soon lashes it to foam within its narrow compass, offers great danger to the luckless boat. More than once the boatmen who conveyed Mr. Randall paused and hesitated as if inclined to return: Mr. Randall was on the point of yielding to their urgent request and advice, when he descried in the distance another vessel heaving with difficulty on the waters; the instinct of affording help to those in trouble urged him to intreat them to proceed, which after promise of a higher pay, they did. The darkness of the storm hung in deeper and deeper folds between him and the

object of his pursuit, and every now and then the heaving to and fro of the vessel prevented his being able to see it; after a few more heavings it finally disappeared; the headlands of wood which shot out into the lake prevented his seeing any distance, and Mr. Randall's impression was that the little boat had perhaps gone into shelter under one of the banks. But a loud cry carried by the wind to his ears convinced him that some accident had taken place; the cry which rung so piercingly still lingered on the air, it struck home to Mr. Randall's heart; the wail was so full of despair and anguish, that it roused every energy in him to reach the scene of suffering. The boatmen now themselves startled by the extreme peril of a fellow-creature, pulled hard to reach the point where the woods bent down into the lake, nearly shutting in the distant passage which formed an outlet from one lake to the other. They were presently hailed by the cry of men near them on the shelving beach, and could discern the figures of those who were hurrying backwards and forwards, as if to discover or rescue the victim of the storm and angry waters. "Pray pull on," cried Mr. Randall, "pray make all speed; the life of a fellow-creature is in imminent peril."

A few more strokes brought them to the beach, when a floating figure beneath the surface of the troubled and lashed waters drew their notice. It was the form of a woman, the face was turned upwards and the hair floating out lay upon the surface of the lake. The figure was drifting out to the open waters. The boat with its keel uppermost was floating by her

side. Mr. Randall caught the hair which lay out spread upon the water and drew the form of Constance from her watery grave. Life seemed to be extinct. The pale colourless lips were compressed and to all appearance the poor sufferer had taken her last earthly journey. They carried her to the shore: a small cottage stands near the meeting of the waters, and into it they carried Constance. Every appliance which could be devised was brought to bear to restore her to life, but for some time all efforts failed. Mr. Randall stood by meditating on the wonderful arrangements of God. Sin does find us out; there is no more power to elude its pursuit than to escape the shaft of the pestilence or the approach of death when once he has seized us. But how blessed is the reflection that there is a chasm which yawns between this condition and the future. To the penitent the pursuit of sin ceases at the edge of that gulf. It follows no more; the spirit passes to the world beyond and He meets it Who has ransomed it from the power of the grave, and "cast all its sins behind His back." The punishment for the arrogance and anger at the smitten rock pursued the erring Lawgiver no more beyond the height of Pisgah. There the pursuit of sin ceased, and in the hour of death he was released to the world from whence he was only to come to attend his LORD on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The pursuit of sin in the pang of constant illness or the daily crushing trial follows often to the last hour of the deathbed. But if under its weight the character has been perfecting in holiness and the pardon of CHRIST

been applied to the penitent, the tried and chastened spirit fleets then into the land of eternal rest.

A check was put to these thoughts by the announcement that signs of returning life were apparent on the countenance of the dying woman.

A deep drawn breath followed, the eyelid opened and the anguish attendant, on reviving consciousness to those in her position appeared on the countenance.

For that moment when returning consciousness might give the power of recognition Mr. Randall waited. Three or four times the unsettled eye had wandered over his face, and passed it without a token of recognition. She looked round the room and again rested her earnest gaze on her husband. A heavy sigh broke from her lips and again she looked at him as if the dawn of mind was breaking. But as it ever is; the one engrossing thought of life became the ruling one in death, and the letter and Raymond returned like fleeting phantoms to the eye of the reviving mind. Like some of those dissolving views we have seen which occupy the empty air with form and colour, and as we fix our eye on where they are to come out, we see the leading figure gather itself up into shape, and become the centre round which the still fleeting vision is to collect; so to the eye of returning consciousness comes out by degrees the form around which is to gather life's last scene. So Raymond at once came in to occupy the vacant space of his mother's mind. And why not? she had no other thought but of him. He had been part of self to her, and with returning life came her child. "Oh, Raymond," said she, "where have you

been so long away—*so long*—and now to meet you by the cold water. But your hand was in mine in the water, and that was all that mattered, you know. I have looked for you so long, so long—and now we will come back to our hut, it was just as you left it; I have altered nothing. Oh, it will be so happy to walk together up the pass and let the ferns and wild birds see that you have come back and that you are again with me. I have so often talked to them about you, my own boy, when I had no one else. Come, make haste, and don't look so wild and sad. Do not stare at me, Raymond, come along."

And she placed her hand in Mr. Randall's, and again closed her eyes; the shock had been too great for her frame, though brought back a few moments, it was all. Death was coming—to solve so many questions; and her tired spirit which had so long laboured and striven for her child was about to meet him beyond the break of the chasm where he waited for her. As her eyelids lay closed she began to speak in low tones of other things, and her husband's name passed her lips; "he, too, has not forgiven me—not forgiven me. But oh, my SAVIOUR, wilt Thou?"

The voice of Mr. Randall sounding in her ears the words of Holy Scripture, which spoke of pardon to the penitent, seemed to arrest her wandering attention. She listened earnestly: "When the wicked man turneth from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

"Lawful and right," said she, "lawful and right;

yes, I tried, I tried; it was very merciful in Him to give me opportunity. Save my soul alive—will He? Do you think He will?"

Mr. Randall tried to fix her thoughts again by the words of consolation. But life ebbed fast: the absorption of her interest on the gaining pardon and acceptance with Him, seemed to take off her recollections of her husband; but in that brief and momentary interval, between the anguish of dying and the act of death—when the powers are often for an instant clear, and the memory definite—she fixed her eyes on him; the glance of recognition could not be mistaken; she knew him. Should he, whose voice had just pronounced the absolution, the pardon of an offended God, hold back his own voice from pardon and mercy? Should he, who had just declared the remittance of the ten thousand talents, refuse himself to remit the hundred pence? Should the long pathway of years, rough with sorrow, though the stones which made it so had been strewn by the hand of the sinner, have been made the road to a forgiving home; and should that same pathway, long enough for God, be too short for man? Should the FATHER, Whose portion he had taken, and from Whose home he had gone, receive with open arms the returning prodigal; and should the elder brother stand hesitating at the door, and refuse to come in to join in the feast of forgiveness and joy?

She died—in full acceptance with man, and in earnest trust of being received and forgiven in heaven. She died with her eye fixed upon her husband, and the smile of full and peaceful expectation of the pardon of

earth being the foretaste of the acceptance of heaven. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The scarlet fillet was white, and the tired being yielded up its heavy load.

Poor wanderer: poor tired traveller on life's painful road: beaten by the winds of sorrow which blew around your advancing footsteps, yet ordered by eternal justice: your race was run, and you went to meet on the other bank him for whom you had so carefully and anxiously worked through life, the opportunity of your penitence, and the cheerer of your sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE STRANGER. THE VILLAGE.

THE summer of '55 was spent by many in sorrow. Since the last August, Alma, Balaklava, and Inkermann, the trenches, and the rifle-pits had made many household seats empty: gardens had lost their loveliness since those had died who planted with us their flowers; and village churchyards had an echo of deeper sadness, since those whose kindred dust lay there, slumbered in the soil of a foreign land. Church bells had a sadder tone, and the old walk by twilight through the copse and over the wooden bridge which spanned the reedy brook, where the musing forms of cows stood out in slumbrous calmness against the evening sky, no longer made the joyous response to our breasts which it used to do.

Among all the altered scenes few were more altered than Brandon. It seemed scarcely credible that so short a time could have made so great a change, could have so imperceptibly removed so many chief actors in its once busy scenes. Leonard and Cicely were gone from the Hall, and Jessy's voice was silent in the Parsonage: Mrs. Larken and her son were no longer the objects of curiosity to the poor and interest to the rich: John Dennis walked to work just as ever, but his step was heavier and more measured, and his voice barely heard; and little Jane went to and fro as if she had only one work before her—her errand—not that second one of finding delight and cheerful joy in every sun-beam and hedge-flower: Mr. Randall's housekeeper had shown the old place to twenty sets of visitors, and told its legends twenty times, and had at last settled down in the conviction that Mr. Randall was working in the mines of Siberia, and that she doubted whether the emperor of Russia would allow his will to be proved at Doctor's Commons, in which a legacy had been left to her.

Letters had come from Cicely as the summer wore on; she was at work in the hospitals; her letters were plain, to the point, simple and kind about everyone; whatever little tinge of romance ever gave its tone to Cicely's mind, or to the going to Seutari, was quite gone now she was there. It is wonderful how soon the most intense scenes of romance lose their glow when we reach them; distance and imagination lend so much to them.

"The difficulties, dear papa, are greater than I ex-

pected to find: I am quite convinced that nothing but the firmness of a character like Miss Nightingale's could have done this work; it needs so much decision to keep the nurses in order, and to manage the difficult cases which arise from the extreme mental and bodily suffering which takes place, that very few people in the world, to say nothing of *women*, could have done the work. I am going to Balaklava under the hope of finding some news about poor Leonard's death, and will write to you full particulars of all I discover. I feel to have seen and learnt a great deal more of life than when I left you. I shall be glad to be back at Brandon, and about my old walks and occupations, to be riding with you, dear papa, and going through my parish work: I am very glad I came out here; I am sure it was the line of my duty, and if I find any trace of dear Leonard's death it will be doubly a cause of satisfaction," &c.

"It is very odd," said the governess, "that Miss Loraine should write about coming home and engaging in home pursuits; I should have thought they would have been very insipid and dull after such a life, and with a disposition so romantic and fine; such a splendid opening, too, for energy and self-devotion!"

"I never saw any romance in my daughter," said Mr. Loraine, "and never expected she would find any romance at Scutari. That Miss Loraine liked riding very much I am quite aware, and that she should look forward to her return when she will be able to resume it is very natural: she has simply gone out to the scene of war under a sense of duty, and when Cicely

conceives she has fulfilled her duty she will return; this I never doubted. Alice, my love, ask your brother if the horses are ready; I must ride over to Burgoyne's to-day:" and Mr. Loraine walked to the window and looked out.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Loraine, "I must confess it seems an unnatural thing that Cicely should have gone out at all under the circumstances, but now she has gone, it would be still more so for her to come back and go out riding directly. It is the most unnatural age altogether that, I should think, the world ever saw; dear old Mrs. Mulso, I begin to feel, is after all most right, though she may be a little too querulous sometimes. Grace, my love, will you walk with me to Mrs. Cripps?"

"Yes, dear mamma, I will go and get ready."

"Papa, Maxwell has gone down to the Rectory, and he forgot to tell Pocock about the horses being ready."

"Gone to the Rectory! why the boy's always there: forgotten the horses! why what is ailing him? he never used to forget horses, he used to live in the stables; I wish he did now. Cicely is the only one, I think, who has her wits about her."

"Well I cannot wish Maxwell back at the stables, anyhow," said Mrs. Loraine.

"I do, sincerely," said Mr. Loraine. "But, however, boys will be boys."

Such was the state of politics at the Hall.

THE PARSONAGE.

But at the Parsonage there was a still more graphic and touching condition of things—graphic, not because it was striking to the eye, for it was not; what took place there was just the same as it ever was, or with the slightest difference, pale blue a little more like grey, or pensive evening a ray nearer twilight. But there was the beauty of it. And it was touching because it found its way to the heart so easily and naturally, there was no effort made to find its way there; and nothing is so touching as unconscious influence, when those who influence us have no intention of doing so, and yet call out our sympathy and affections.

There they sat together—the same old couple—Mr. Seymour and Jessy, in the study or in Jessy's room as the case might be. He was always cheerful and she was always sad, and that was after all very much what it used to be, only that now his cheerfulness was a little more forced, and her sadness a little more real; for Jessy used as some thought to play at sadness, or rather to like the idea of it and be coy with it: and now the shade she had followed had become a form or substance which followed her whether she would or no, a part of self, mingled in her being and nature, and steeping in the sadder tones of colour each object and circumstance of the passing day.

There was often a third who joined this company, Mrs. Thorburn, whose delight it was to come down when Mrs. Mulso could let her, and share in the simple reality of the actors of the Parsonage.

And Mrs. Thorburn was a comfort to those at the

Parsonage; Mr. Seymour so respected her judgment, and to Jessy her voice brought back good thoughts and calm associations.

And what was Jessy's state? well, it is hard to say. No doubt nothing is harder than to determine the barrier lines and limits between the full exercise of reason and its submission; in fact who can? our soul like a bird rests on the bars of the cage and waits her release, she sometimes may flutter nearer the bars; the spirit may sometimes beat more earnestly against the limits of her bodily prison. It is hard to distinguish the limit.

And such was Jessy's spirit; the light which broke in upon her soul's eye was all too strong, she could not rest and she struggled for her freedom. Still it was all unconscious.

From the fair Ophelia down to the last sad sorrower by a morbid conscience and perverted reason it has ever been the same, that the clear limits of insanity are hard to define.

Jessy had strong affections, but loved too intensely, too confidingly for this broken, shattered world. She had too much of an ideal before her eyes, and loved up to that and tested her love by that, and when she fell short of her ideal, or those she loved did, she was sad and disheartened. We cannot love according to ideality. We must love naturally as the tide flows, as the stream rushes. There is no use in making wide channels and deep river beds when the spring does not yield water enough to fill them. It will but give a shrunk and shallow brook.

This idealism of Jessy made her so depend on her idea that she could not fancy living without its existence and satisfied presence. There seemed nothing else to live for and she got so in the habit of thinking this that all life's objects seemed pale and colourless when for a few moments the sun of that ideal was shrouded by some passing cloud. Cicely only loved when she could not help it: loved because the feeling came, and she must attend to it; rather shunned it than otherwise and a little laughed about it. Jessy tried to love and made up her mind that life was nothing without it. Then too, Jessy found a want of companionship; she was peculiar, and no one quite understood her or sympathized with her: Mr. Seymour loved her tenderly, nevertheless he did not quite understand her. He seemed with all her affection for him, a little cold and harsh and unelastic. She wanted a home beyond the parsonage, a home of *her own*, where she might plan and act and influence and be a single point to him for whom she had been willing to give without reserve her whole life, a system of which she was the sun, shedding its soft lustre on all her little universe of satellites.

And then it is true Jessy was far from strong in health, her constitution had been early broken by illness and she had never quite rallied, as her appearance showed.

With all these combinations of circumstance it was scarcely wonderful that the shock she had received should have been most severe, and that she should have wellnigh sunk under it; such a curtain seemed to

have fallen over her future with such heavy folds! She would not fix her love again, and she had nothing but a long waste of years to look to, pointless, loveless, and solitary.

Her condition took the shape of listlessness and indifference. She recovered that first wild shock and would sometimes talk with those around her, especially with Mrs. Thorburn. But by degrees this became more and more uncertain and fitful and the long pauses of silence which ensued between her more cheerful hours became more and more extended and prolonged.

She used often to go down to the almshouse, where Mrs. Tilley lived and she would sit between the two old ladies for the hour together. They got quite accustomed to her and understood her thoroughly, and would prepare tea while she was there and would talk about her while she sat there, as "poor dear thing," and "poor young soul," and "what a tender plant! the Lord bless her," and they drew her close to their little fire, summer as it was. And good old Nanny would make a joke to Jessy with her goodnatured smile and talk to her as if she were a little child. And then Mrs. Tilley would frown and sigh and gaze into the fire-light, and do the very thing herself which she had chided Nanny for doing, and do it exactly in the same way without the slightest difference.

So a whole hour would pass away between one striking of the clock and the next and still the tea was on the table and the toast had not yet ceased sending up its comfortable odour, and the teapot was still un-

exhausted and Nanny had told three old stories about the war, "in her young days," and Mrs. Tilley had listened as if she had heard and taken in nothing, but sat musing on the fire-light, and as Nanny finished her narration with a smile and a nod of her head, Mrs. Tilley said, "Ah," and "Mussy on us," and then the clock struck, and Jessy rose and sighed and put her hand in Nanny's and moved to the door, while the two old ladies followed her so kindly, and said, "God bless you, miss, and bring better days," and Jessy stood still and looked at them a minute, and then walked on; and they, as they looked after her, did not speak for a moment, but said, "Poor young thing," and washed up the tea-cups.

So another chapter of Jessy's life drew to its close, in which the chief actors were Mrs. Tilley and old Nanny, and her chief occupation a tea-table, and a solitary walk which a kind of instinct made her take to the almshouse. But sometimes Jessy was more cheerful, and less apparently crushed by her sorrows, and there were moments which gave great hopes to her friends that she would eventually rally. Mrs. Thorburn was her chief companion. There was no one to whom she rose so freely and cheerfully as to her.

When Mrs. Thorburn could gain her attention, her object was to raise her thoughts at once to a healthier view of her state and God's dealings with her, and to get her to feel that all those gleams and convictions she had had from time to time had been sent on purpose to prepare her for a trial like this: and very often Jessy would gaze at her and press her hand and kneel

down as if expecting Mrs. Thorburn to pray with her : though often she would seem to take small notice of words which passed over her making no impression.

It was late one evening in early autumn, and Jessy had been worse than she had since the beginning of her sad malady. Mr. Seymour had been sitting with her, and striving in vain to attract her attention and engage her interest. He had read "Maud" to her despite of his own impression that it was great nonsense, and he read pieces of "In Memoriam" because he knew Jessy had been in the habit of reading it with Leonard, and he had heard it was very beautiful though he could not understand it. But none had any effect on Jessy's mind, her eye was fixed on the quiet grey tower which stood plainly and calmly outside the window ; she only gave a gentle sigh every now and then, and that was all. The good clergyman gazed at that young face till the tear rose up into his eye, for he had nothing left in this wide world he could strictly call his own save Jessy ; and there was nothing else for which particularly he had lived ; and to see her a wreck, and leave her so, seemed too dreadful : yet he bent calmly and cheerfully to God's will.

He took up "Westward ho !" which Mrs. Thorburn had been reading in Jessy's room, and had left there ; he imagined that that was the right thing to read, and that anyone who admired Tennyson of course admired Kingsley, two men of the movement day equally unintelligible to him. He fell on the chapter in which "Sir Amyas" is described, but he soon dropped it, for he doubted whether it was at all likely to effect the object,

since he imagined that even his antiquated intellect could dive into some of its meaning, and besides Jessy was apparently perfectly untouched by it. Mr. Seymour's eye wandered over the table as if in doubt what to take up next; none of his own peculiar school of books were there, and indeed he had not any very firm impression that *reading to her* was the thing to do to rouse her, except that he had heard that it and homoeopathy were the received recipes of the day for most things.

He at last bethought himself of the Bible, and opening the sacred volume he began to read; he chose one of the Psalms, the 71st, and as his clear deep voice read the several verses it occasionally trembled with its touching applicability to his own and his child's position. Jessy still seemed unmoved; her eye was yet fixed on the tower; and scarcely a slight recognition of what her father had been reading was made by her; he turned to the 103rd Psalm, one which he had an impression he had often seen open on Jessy's table; it was one which she and Leonard had often read together, and one which they still continued to read in connection with each other after they had parted. It seemed to strike a more sensitive chord; and Jessy's lips unclosed.

Mr. Seymour read the verse, "For He knoweth our frame;" and before he had time to finish it, her voice calmly and clearly completed it, "He remembereth we are but dust."

Having tried in vain to arouse the wandering mind of Jessy, and finding she only relapsed more and more into vacancy and abstraction, Mr. Seymour rose to go:

as he left the room he cast his parting look on his child which betokened how heavily the good man felt the sorrows of his child; yet that firm and real trust in God which was and had so long been to him a living reality bore him up, and he returned to his own room to pray and read his usual portion of good Bishop Wilson's sermons, whose high and simple lessons of truth had ever, in so large a manner, contributed to Mr. Seymour's peace and happiness in life.

Jessy still sat alone. She was gazing as she often did for hours at the old church tower, and musing on some far off scene in the realms of imagination over which the form of Leonard constantly moved. How long she sat there she never knew; but this evening with greater power than usual the chimes, and the clock striking seemed to arrest her wandering sense, and soothe her troubled mind. The books lay around her which she had left scattered on the table since Leonard left, and the piano stood open over whose notes she occasionally passed her fingers, as she played the beginning of some tune which she remembered, the end of which ever wandered off into some strange fancy of her own. The evening light of autumn glowing from the sunset shone in through the window, and glimmered on the wall beneath the piano, giving that sweet and melancholy glow which so belongs to evenings in early spring and autumn, shed on the lower part of the walls while the ceiling is left in shadows; a little company of gnats were playing and sporting over the carpet in the warm yellow light, leaping in noiseless antics through their mazy dance.

On the table lay Leonard's portrait, it never left Jessy's side; although it was seldom taken up by her but lay with its thin coat of dust a neglected yet an accustomed thing, she would gaze at it as it lay, but seldom touched or took it up. Outside the lulling sounds of evening melted off in drowsy distance; the shouts of village children trooping home, and the wheels of cumbrous wagons rolling in the far off high-road, with every now and then the low of a cow, or the bark of a distant dog, filled in the melody of the village autumn evening. These scenes are full of meditation, and Jessy's mind was touched by it all; she had sunk back into her chair, and with her hair thrown back over her forehead, and her hands folded, she gazed listlessly through the window.

A footstep trod on the turf outside; it approached the window; it was probably the gardener before he left for home trailing the clematis which had fallen down over Jessy's window. But the shadow which was cast by the advancing figure darkened the opposite wall in its dim, shady outlines. Jessy's eye wandered from off the church tower, and paused upon the figure which now stood before the window; it was that of a man: a long cloak dropped from his shoulders to the ground; he stood like one who stands in thought, gazing at a scene connected with the past. But by degrees the forms and outlines in the little twilight room seemed to come out to his eye, and he changed his attitude and drew a little nearer. It was in fact an hour whose sombre quiet assisted meditative mood, and the church clock striking seven added to the lulling

stillness of the garden and the room ; while the long low stretch of the old Parsonage with its gables and masses of jessamine and clematis which clung in masses round it, must have stood out to the eye of the wanderer mellowed in peculiar beauty in the autumn twilight.

Jessy's eye which had fallen on the figure remained fixed upon it, as if it were but one of the many objects which she made part of her unconscious gaze.

She slowly rose, and moving to the window which stood partly open to admit the mild evening air, she stepped upon the gravel path on which he was standing, and laying her hand upon his arm she looked up steadfastly and quietly into his face ; she did not speak, nor did a movement of her countenance betoken emotion. There was only the calm settled gaze with which she looked at him with those large speaking eyes, which had had of late so very sad an expression : nor did he speak, for he stood as one taken by surprise ; he looked at her, waiting for her to say his name, and hesitating between surprise and alarm to break the spell of silence. She placed her hand in his, and without taking her eye off his face she led him to the window ; and he holding her hand in his, and dropping his soldier's cloak upon the grass, followed where she led him. They walked hand in hand as children will who full of their own mimic plans walk together silently : she led him to a chair opposite the one on which she always sat, and sitting down herself, still keeping his hand in her's, she began so steady and searching a gaze into his eye, that it went far to upset his self-command, for he saw

something was the matter which he did not know. And yet there was not recognition in that look. It was as the look of one who looks on something long accustomed, yet somewhat strange in its appearance now. As we fancy we look in dreams of the night when we dream of some dear one who died ten years ago, who used to talk with us by the fireside, and wander with us by moonlight fields and scenes of happy childhood, and now has been "long dead;" and in that dream we feel it strange, and yet not strange, that he should be with us and sitting there, though there is ever something about his look or manner which is an indication of something unusual in his appearance, either he is very pale, or very silent, or very sad; still his is an old accustomed form.

So did Jessy look at him who sat opposite her. She sighed deeply, yet very lightly, three or four times, as one does who is dying easily, whose thin stream of life is at its exit passing on a shallow, quiet current out to its great sea; and as she sighed her eye never moved from its calm, deep, steady gaze: nor did she drop his hand from hers. He quite bewildered and perplexed, sat with his head leaning on his other hand, and his arm on her table. How long they sat there he did not know; but the bell of the church clock tolled out the quarter-past seven while they sat there; the sound did not disturb her or break the still monotony of the moment. He was in great difficulty what to do; he longed to press that dear form to his breast, but an indescribable awe held him down; he waited for her to speak and to break the spell; once only he looked away at some slight

sound in the garden, but there was nothing. His military cloak lay upon the gravel, its dark folds seemed almost to have some individual reality, so arresting is any object to the eye when the mind is absorbed in attention. She sighed again softly and he looked round. Though but a few minutes had passed, they seemed ages; so long and fearful was the struggle of her returning power to understand the mystery; but as yet it was vacancy more than imagination.

There was a footstep in the passage. Good Mr. Seymour had been reading and calming his mind in his study by prayer and earnest intercourse with God. He could not stay any longer; he was as a vigilant and watchful sentinel at poor Jessy's door; none could be more so; always there, at early morning and at late evening, to relieve a little of the weight of sorrow, and to divert if possible the current of her thoughts.

With his usual cautious step he was now approaching the door of Jessy's room. He listened as he ever did outside. But all was still, just as still as ever; no sound, no movement, and he opened the door slowly. The dimness of the twilight for the moment prevented him seeing clearly round the room, but he saw the place where Jessy usually sat and Jessy was sitting there; but she did not as usual look up at him. Mr. Seymour advanced into the room, nor till then did he become aware of anyone else being present. The stranger sat with his face turned from the door, and the shadows of evening had fallen so heavily, that Mr. Seymour had come close to the chair before he was

aware of anyone being near Jessy. The entrance of Mr. Seymour made the new comer look round.

His eye met that of the clergyman as he turned to rise.

"Leonard Loraine!" said Mr. Seymour, with a voice in which were blent feelings of unutterable astonishment, incredulity, and delight.

The spell was broken; the deep stillness of the scene hitherto had lulled poor Jessy's powers to a kind of dreamy slumber; but the voice and the name broke the spell. "Leonard Loraine;" yes that name and spoken by her father's voice broke up the frozen fountain. It awoke the memories of years; it touched like an electric wand the fleeting forms of the dream, and turned them into reality. It in an instant brought all her powers to a centre; till then she had looked at him, and mused on him, but had not recognised him, knew him unconsciously to herself; knew him as we know what is ever round us, and of which we take no special heed—the pictures on an old wall, the tree which has hung outside our window for twenty years; we fix sad gazes on them when we are sad, or smile on them when we are gay; they help our sadness, or seem to sympathize with our gaiety. But we go no further. So her eye had rested so long, so steadily on Leonard's face. The name had done the work. She rose; his hand was still in her's. Leonard rose too: for an instant the vacant manner did not pass away.

"How long you've been," said she, and as she spoke she sighed; "so long."

"Jessy," said Leonard. "Jessy Seymour."

And that completed the work : with one long, wild cry she sunk upon the ground.

The bird was free ; it had fluttered long against the bars of its poor, broken, fragile cage ; the door was open, and it was free, *free*—flown out into the wide open air. But whither was it to fly ? The sky was all stormy, and the winds were high ; but it had flown. Had it flown never to return ? was the cage which lay there finally shattered, and broken ?

THE COTTAGE.

That evening more scenes than one which told deep lessons of human nature were going on in Brandon ; for if the war bring out bitter griefs and sorrows, and wring the heart with anguish, the beam of hope and daylight sometimes breaks where only night had appeared to hang and gather in before. Dennis's cottage was ever the same, nothing changed it ; weal or woe, high price or low price, success or adversity, Dennis always found the same on his return from work, and never found a difference. Mrs. Dennis was an active cheerful woman, who without knowing it was ever acting on high principle and was far above many around her ; she was governed by a few simple rules of conduct which were calculated to form a really elevated character. There are many such among the poor whom we know little of, or rather think little of because all their duties are common duties, and they do not rise above the ordinary scale ; but it tells in the long run, and the village funeral with its long straggling procession of following mourners and gazers shows beyond doubt

that a place is empty, and a home desolate, in which desolation all the village participates. Mrs. Dennis's first object in life was her husband, and then her children; but while she carefully considered them, she never suffered her attendance at church and her own prayers to be placed aside. No one ever knew her place vacant at service on Sunday, and often on the week-day evening. Her figure, and Dennis beside her, were as accustomed to the eye of all there as Mr. Seymour's in the pulpit, and the organ in the loft. And in this daily routine of duty sorrow and trouble found no way to the surface; they did not struggle upwards; there was no conscious discipline; for the daily duties of life were in themselves discipline, and their performance kept all in the right place. I do not mean there were no deep down throbs and throes which sometimes yearned for utterance; there were. But without any of his philosophy or half his consciousness, Dennis and his wife would have thought it quite as wrong to have shown or yielded to them as Socrates himself.

John was Mrs. Dennis's pride, and Jane her father's; and John's death, if such were true, was a severe blow to them all; and dead he surely was, for since the report of Leonard's death had come nothing had been heard of John; it was singular both should have died together, but they clearly had.

But the impression of his death was just the same on the minds of Dennis's family, as was each incident of life. There was no probing of feelings, no analysis of sensations, no floating to the surface of the heart's emotions.

"Have you heard of your John, Master Dennis?" said Master Wetherley, as he walked by his side to work under the hedge, having just been talking of the price of bread, and just going to talk of the weather.

"No; he's dead no doubt, or what is worse, a prisoner. Poor lad: more's the pity."

"He was a good youth; this war takes off the best amongst us, I'm thinking. Our Jack 'listed last week, and we've heard nothing of him since: his mother sakes on sadly, but there is no use fretting, so I tell the old girl."

And Dennis went to work.

And as he worked Mr. Lorraine rode up, and began to talk about cutting down the hedge more this autumn, and widening and clearing out the ditch.

And the master and man went on talking for some twenty minutes, and talked sternly and simply and really and in earnest about cutting down a September hedge, though in both the light of life was quenched, and the hearth of next Christmas desolate; and after they had settled the matter of the hedge, and Mr. Lorraine, with his stick pressed on his foot, and his brow knit, and his hand curbing in his restless cob, and his voice speaking sharply and impatiently, had finished the talk and had ridden off he stopped it, and without looking round said, "Have you heard anything of your lad?"

And Dennis, whose eye had been calculating the measurement and proportions of the ditch, and his hand leaning on his spade in the attitude of profound attention, as if his whole mind were fixed on it and

nothing else, except when he made a dash at a rat which rushed out of the ditch and he missed it, answered his master, "No, sir: any more news of Master Leonard? Dear, dear, what a pity; such a fine young man, such a fine young man: does the lady take on so much as she did? no wonder, dear heart."

As if he had not lost a son too, and as if the blow which fell on Mr. Loraine fell with equal force on him, and the sorrows of the master were the sorrows of the man.

Mr. Loraine was always at a difficulty to express the sympathising part of his nature, yet he wanted to do so to Dennis; but then Dennis was the last man in the world to receive the sympathising part of nature; he did not know how to receive it, nor Mr. Loraine how to give it.

"Oh, Dennis, Mrs. Loraine wishes to have your Jane as a servant at the hall; she's a tidy clean little girl, and it will be a help to her in life to give her a start at the hall, besides ——"

"God bless you, sir, I'll ask my missis. But I don't know if she can spare her exactly, nevertheless, it will be a wonderful fine thing for the girl. I'm much obliged to you, I'm sure, but ——"

But Mr. Loraine had ridden on, and the cob was plunging into the mud on the greensward under the park pales.

And Dennis began to ruminate. It did cross his mind how silent the house would be if both Jane and John were gone out of it; but it never entered his mind to hesitate about her going as it would be good

for Jane, and by and by she would reap the benefit. So Dennis went on digging, and Mr. Lorraine thought to himself "Well, I thought Dennis would have been more pleased with my offer than he is, he needn't have hesitated about Jane's coming to the hall; well, it's natural, too." And Mr. Lorraine rode on.

So master and man dug on and rode on, and each took the events of life as the ordering of God, not to be resisted or complained of, and the duties of life as their own to be done and not to be neglected.

That evening when Mr. Lorraine reached home. But —

Mrs. Dennis was waiting at home. Tea was on the table, and the house was always tidiness itself; nothing was out of place. The line of brass candlesticks and pans were on the chimney-piece, the highly polished Windsor chairs, the tidy hearth, and Jane's cat purring on a stool by the fire; the kettle simmered and sung on the hearth, and the shadows danced and flickered on the wall. The corner cupboard was arranged full of the best crockery, and five or six small ornaments and a china shepherd and shepherdess leaning against trees, of whose trunks they formed part, and all their leaves were gold, and the little puppy was gold which lay at the shepherd's feet, doubtless the tree from which Paris's apple was plucked, and the shepherd's dress lay open on his bosom and was spotted pink, his garters dangled at his knees, and he wore short breeches; while the lady on the other side wore a hat and had a dress of the same chintz as the shepherd—which is the strangest thing in the world as they were not yet mar-

ried, and you never see anyone in the same chintz or with exactly the same anything; so you wonder where on earth all those huge bales of unused stuff can be, off which your's was cut at Shoolbred's or Flint House, for when you *do* see a room carpeted with the same carpet as your own, you are so surprised that you stand and laugh and must call in some one, the footman or the lady of the house, to express your interest—so how this shepherd and shepherdess had a piece off the same white and pink spotted chintz is a wonder; then she had a white goat with golden horns to match his puppy; in fact they formed the prettiest group conceivable and suggested the happiest thoughts; and I have been thus long in describing them for many reasons.

So good Mrs. Dennis waited the return to tea of Jane who has gone to school, and Dennis who has gone to work. There was one thing in the room I have not mentioned and that was John's great-coat and Sunday hat, which always used to hang on a peg inside the door, and there they hung still; she said when he first went, "Oh, you are mighty fine now in your scarlet and your yellow. But your old mother still has your cast-offs; and the Sunday coat and hat shall stay there till you come back to wear them, and then I suppose you'll be too fine to walk with the old mother to church, for you'll be an officer then."

"An emperor, you mean, mother," said Jane correcting her mother's mistake.

And when he was gone and news of battle came, then she used to look at the great-coat and hat, and say, "there they hang, my John's things; God bless him.

Oh, shan't I be proud to see him when he comes back, but he shan't put them on to walk with me to church, he shall go in his scarlet, and I shall be envied by them all in the village when my boy comes back from the war; God bless him."

But when the news of Leonard's death came, and there was no doubt John was dead too, for they had undoubted evidence of it, then Mrs. Dennis said nothing about the coat and hat, never spoke of them, but it was noticed by more than one how regularly they were brushed and put tidy as they hung on the door peg; and sometimes little Jane's eye would wander to her mother's face, as from some unusual silence in the busy little woman her child was surprised, and she looked and saw her mother's eye fixed on the peg, but directly Mrs. Dennis saw Jane's eye fixed upon her there ever came a sharp "go along, child, you haven't tidied up the back house, and, bless me, the cups ain't washed, and ——" no end of more neglect and all owing to the hat and coat on the door peg.

And this evening Mrs. Dennis was waiting for her husband and Jane.

Who, Jane, had gone down to the shop after school to get the shop things for to-morrow, and as she went with her basket on her arm she chattered and gossiped all the way with Sally Birch, and Mary Standage, and Emma Marten, and Anna Fosket all about anything, hips and haws, the emperor of Russia, her mother's cat, how many pints were in a gallon, the next May-queen, Sebastopol, and——a word of John. She was universally popular and loved by all, rich and poor; so

light, so kind, so cheerful, so clean and so full of gossip-talk, always ready to do a kind turn, and always the best at an emergency.

Away she went this evening with her group of admirers and followers, full of jangling talk, which was something like this following, (for all conversations may be recorded if you wish to describe a man's philosophy or his character, from the days of Plato's *Phædo*, and Xenophon's *Cyropsædia* to this account of Jane Dennis.)

Sally. "I'll tell your mother, see if I don't."

Anna. "I don't care, tell her if you like."

The first remark was a friendly and dignified warning from one who bore upon herself the anxious charge of management. She that managed girls was Sally Birch, and Anna Fosket was the child controlled. Anna would stretch after hips, with her feet on tiptoe on the grass sward, her figure extended over the ditch like a slanting Menai bridge, and her hands clutching the thorny bough of crimson hips, while her dinner basket lay neglected on the path; the remainder of the company standing a few yards lower down talking and waiting for Anna, though they were scarcely conscious they were doing so.

Sally. "There now, I told you so; oh, won't I tell your mother; oh, won't she give it you. Oh, you naughty thing; isn't your pincloth in a mess!"

For Anna had tumbled into the ditch in her vain efforts, and had ascended from it like a mermaid dripping with the muddy drops.

Sally slapped her on the neck, gave her pincloth a

shake, pushed her basket into her hand, and on they walked.

Sally. "I say, Jane Dennis, isn't your brother turned into a Cassock?"

"No," said Jane gravely, "he's killed by a Cassack."

"My brother Jem's killed, mother thinks," said Mary Standage; "and mother says as how we shan't see him again in this world."

"My brother John was so brave," said little Jane, hesitating between gossip and a tear; too sensible to yield entirely to the one, and too firm and heroic to give in to the other.

"Father says, as how, he doesn't think it right to fret because he's been so brave and good to young Master Leonard. John was killed in the trenches."

"Was he shot and cut up?" said Sally.

"We haven't heard," said Jane, "Mrs. Sheppard dreamt about him and says she saw him with three bayonets in him. But mother doesn't make much account of that."

"I saw your brother John in a dream, Jane," said Sally.

"He'd have been a colonel if he lived, Mr. Lorraine says, and father says that's enough to make him happy."

"Why can't they make him a colonel now?" asked Sally.

"Why he's dead," said Jane surprised.

"Well, and what of that? they are putting up a tomb to young Mr. Lorraine in the church and yet

he ain't in it, why shouldn't they make John a colonel?"

There was a profound sophism and a plausible truth in this logic which perplexed even Jane, whose clear mind could not disentangle it, and there was a silence.

Jane really loved her brother, and John's death had made a strange vacuum, a very empty place in Jane's home. No brother or sister in Brandon loved each other more, none. When Jane was a little bright-eyed baby, for she was always a happy child, John used to carry her to the shop while Jane's little round hand would play with her brother's hair which curled naturally round his head, and when she could walk John used to lead her to school, she looking as clean as a "washed calico button" as her mother used to call her.

And when Jane grew older it was her turn to serve John and mend his things, and make his bed, and get his tea, and look grave when he was silent, and laugh when he was merry, and sometimes sigh now he was dead.

"I say, there goes a soldier," said Anna, "as red as red."

"Maybe he'll know something of your John. Go and ask him, Jane; I would."

"Oh, I daren't," said little Jane, "how can you, Sally?"

"Well, I would; depend upon it he'd tell you something about him; one soldier must know of another."

It was a little dusk, so that the figure of the approaching soldier was not very clearly seen.

"I'll go and ask him myself," said Sally.

"Oh for shame, Sally," said Jane.

"He's coming round the turn in the road, see if he isn't; well, to be sure, if I wouldn't speak to him, Jane; a soldier's sister, and not speak to a soldier, if I were—Jane, I say."

But Jane didn't answer, and as Sally was at the moment she spoke looking up at the acorns on a tree over her, she did not see why Jane did not answer; "Jane, I say."

But Jane had rushed into her brother's arms, and was sobbing, "Oh, John, John," upon the young soldier's face.

And Mrs. Dennis waited tea, and could not imagine where her husband or her girl were; so she looked rather more than usual at the coat and hat on the peg, and had time to arrange and brush them unobserved; and, good woman, she took real pleasure in being able to indulge her love for her boy alone and by herself, she could not let herself do it if any were present, but alone she could take a strange pleasure in that old coat and hat.

Mrs. Dennis was not very like Lady Constance, nor was John the facsimile of Arthur Plantagenet, nevertheless, without talking like that lady she had much the same feelings as the wife of Geoffrey had when she talked of "grief, stuffing out his vacant garment with his form;" anyhow Mrs. Dennis had not reached that condition of feeling which had "reason to be fond of grief."

The footsteps of Jane came so quickly to the door

and the latch was lifted so rapidly, that Mrs. Dennis had scarcely had time to look round before Jane was in the room and had rushed wildly and madly to her mother's arms, shouting "Oh, mother; our John, our John." The good woman was fairly terrified; she had had no time to collect her thoughts before her eye fell on the figure which rose silently in the doorway—that figure which could alone fill with "its form the vacant garment" of the Sunday hat and coat. And the three wept and laughed and wept together, the mother and the sister, and the long lost brother.

Three—but there was a fourth, a fourth to make that little home complete, and Jane could not resist the scheme of taking her father by surprise: John was to sit in her chair at tea, and mother in her right place, and she by John's side where she used, and father's chair was to be the only one empty, and then, like Macbeth in the play, he was to find out that "the seats were full." All the tableau was complete just as Dennis's heavy tread was heard outside; John's back was turned to the door, and it being a little dusk Dennis could not at first see him; but Jane could not contain herself, she moved up and down, laughed and cried, and as her father opened the door she fairly sprang to her legs, for though she had got up the whole tableau herself and was to play prima donna, nevertheless, she alone broke up the whole, and though her mother and John sat just as she had placed them, Jane—I mean the prima donna—had rushed straight to her father, who had turned round and was placing his tools against the corner of the wall.

"Well, my girl," said he, not looking round, "I've news for you. You are to go to the hall. What do you think of that? and be my lady's servant."

"Oh father, father," shouted Jane; and he thought it was all about "the place."

"Have you heard anything of our John?" said Mrs. Dennis winking at John.

"No," said Dennis, still with his back to the table, for the spade would not stand straight. "No, nothing. They're putting up the marble slab in the church to Master Leonard, and I've been thinking whether we couldn't have something for our John."

"Father, father," still shouted Jane.

"What's the matter, girl?" said Dennis.

But this time he had looked round, and his eye had fallen on the tea table: slow to yield to grief, and slow to complain, Dennis was not slow to know his boy.

And they four sat together; and the shepherd and shepherdess looked at them from the cupboard and seemed to enjoy the tea; the shepherd never looked so winning, nor the shepherdess so smiling, nor the golden puppy so near to wagging his tail, nor the gold horned goat to making friends with the dog who was clearly in future days to be his companion; and the Sunday coat and hat looked forth from the peg, and the fire shone and flared and shed red amber light on them all.

And then hour after hour passed by, and the battles of Alma and Inkermann and the captivity were told and told again, and the cat had purred and slept and woke and slept again; and never had a grace been said more full of meaning than that which Dennis said to-

night, "For these and all His mercies, God's holy Name be praised."

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

THE CHURCH. THE MASON.

And more than one curious scene took place that afternoon. A mason was at work in the church. The old tower had seen all sorts of people come up at all hours, night and day, beneath its quiet shadow; it knew more secrets and witnessed more silent weeping hours than anything else in the parish. There were funeral trains which walked so slowly up when no one spoke a word, or little children only stared and wondered; and undertakers made dumb motions and walked backwards, and bearers heaved and agonised beneath the heavy load, the last good office they could do for him whose corpse lay there, and no one spoke. Oh, surely no scene in earth to which the text belongs like a funeral train, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy."

The church tower used to look so kindly down on these as if it said, "Come, lay your burden here, I will guard it till the judgment day;" and its very music bells seemed to say "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth we are but dust," echo of heaven of which it spoke to earthly sorrowers. Never changing, always the same, always in the same time—like heaven is, till time shall be no more.

And then there came a single, silent, solitary mourner to deck the grave with flowers, a little strange memorial,

and she would stand and gaze and *think*—and *think*, until it seemed as if all life were thought of and remembered then; each kind word to be heard no more, each patiently borne anguish, each gentle look, each pleading warning and entreaty; the home desolate now, so empty, a constant conscious vacuum in life's daily path. So the tower watched the mourner, and saw her walk away so silently with the child who held the hand, who did not know how orphaned he was as he stared surprised at his mother's silence, and then gathered daisies from the churchyard grass. Childhood's first solemnity where it must not laugh: a first visit to the grave.

And then came those who decked the church for festivals, and who prepared it for Sundays. How quietly they moved about thinking of those who did sit here last Sunday and would kneel here next, so completely arranging all at their own will; with such strange memorials of life's brief journey gathered round them compelling meditation.

Then came the workmen who repaired the breaches of the church and chiselled sculptured tombs. Surely how glorious it would be if such men were specially appointed to do the work of God's house, and as in old days were an order of their own, or at least if not so would that even those who work and toil beneath the church's roof would, like the carpenters and masons of king Josiah, "deal faithfully" when they work in the Lord's house. And Reuben Smith was working there to-day, carving at a slab which stood out on the wall just near the chancel arch, on which the evening light

would glow and flush and pale away again by morning light again : and the slab was a memorial put up by the Loraines, and on it were the words sculptured "Leonard Loraine," and Reuben was carving the last letters.

And Reuben was a good youth, and twice the tear had dimmed his eye, for he had been Leonard's pupil in days gone by and he had loved him well ; and as he carved, and chiselled, and cut at the marble he "dealt faithfully," for he prayed the while, and thought how brief life was and how soon its journey was done, and how strange to think of seeing all we speak about and hearing all we teach to others ; and he determined and resolved he would try and serve God better, and would be at the Holy Communion next Sunday, God willing, and come into the church and examine himself before he received it ; and forgive Silas Newton with whom he had been at enmity, and correct the slander he had uttered about William Wallace last summer. And as he thought of this it seemed so beautiful to him to be good and holy and true, and he loved the thought of it, and he prayed about it, and he stood on the step of his ladder with the tools laid on the top step and his eye lost in vacancy, and he felt so happy, and he prayed so truly, and he thought so tearfully of Leonard and loved his enemy and remembered his Sunday classes and Leonard's kind voice and loving eye, and earnest words of his descriptions of heaven.

Then he turned round to go on sculpturing the stone at the letter "A" of Loraine, and the evening light had begun to settle with that sweet quiet glow on the white stone wandering somehow from the west window ;

and he could not help thinking of how the slab would stand there in storm and calm, morning and night, always there—now with sunlight stealing over it, now with moonlight creeping across it and staying there to bring out the large dark letters as if in its own voiceless way it would speak Leonard's name and begin to dwell on the record of one gone to glory. How dark the church would be sometimes and still the stone would stand out a little, and then on the Christmas morning how it would look quiet and pale in the light: so he thought about the slab.

“When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls.

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies,
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dark is dipt in gray.

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the chancel like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.”

But I dare to say Reuben had read but little of “In Memoriam” and had but seldom expressed his thoughts in the beautiful language of the Laureat, nevertheless he had the thoughts and there is the point of poetry, it expresses what all feel.

And so Reuben went on to chisel this slab. He had not spent so good and holy an hour for years as that and he felt as if he longed to be always in the church, always. Then he remembered the Psalm Master Leonard had so often taught him to learn and say by heart, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee." And he paused to think "how true the Psalms were."

True! of course they are true, who ever doubted it? if you let them, they *come out so* by circumstances; yes, and Reuben, you will find that more and more each day of onward life, they will "*come out so*," the Psalms of daily service come out so wonderfully, there is a point about them which belongs to each day and circumstance of life, there is no commentary in the world on the Psalms like the day's circumstances. Talk of commentary, just go to daily service and use the Psalms each day, and you will find more commentary than in volumes and volumes of annotations on them; the commentary of daily life—our own commentary—proving that God is ever with us; yes, that is the commentary. Yes, Reuben, the Psalms are true indeed. Attend daily service, Reuben, and you will find it out more and more.

Such were some of Reuben's thoughts as he fancied he heard a sound in the silent church, and he turned round. There was a figure of some one who had just entered, a figure covered with a long cloak and Reuben

watched it in the far off distant nave under the west window in the dim light of the approaching evening; two figures now, they two together in the great silent church. There is always something striking about this sort of thing; the stranger clearly did not see Reuben, for his eye was bent upon the pavement and he seemed seeking some particular spot in the church. Reuben watched him from his ladder, for the evening light fell more clearly on the stranger's dark cloak and form than on the hand of the mason as he stretched back from his ladder to watch the new visitor to the church. The stranger having come to a spot which seemed to be the one which he was looking for, he paused, and with his hat in his hand and his eye fixed on the pavement, he seemed lost in meditation; he stood near the pew occupied by the Loraines—for unfortunately Brandon church was not yet unpewed, for good Mr. Seymour "never could see"—but of that another time. The stranger stood gazing at the pew or the pavement in the meditative mood in which one does who reads the long past and gazes on the gleams of the flickering light of evening.

At length, apparently having gained his object as far as musing would gain it, he quietly and reverently fell on his knees and seemed absorbed in earnest silent prayer; so Reuben laid down his chisel and his hammer and forgot his masonry in the fact of being in the house of God. Having been for some minutes occupied in prayer the stranger rose and seeming anxious to continue his observations of the church he moved slowly and calmly towards the chancel, still not seeing Reu-

ben, who watched the figure advance towards the chancel step. A slight paleness, if anyone had been there to notice it, might have been seen to creep over the young mason's countenance. He was not a coward or superstitious, still in that quiet hour in the church forms like the shadows of the dead were calculated to excite a momentary sensation of awe, and Reuben felt it as he gazed at the approaching form. But the stranger had again paused, and in a clear low voice uttered the words, "O God of my fathers, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant."

"Master Leonard," said a voice near him, as the faithful Reuben slid from the ladder and paused a moment before his young master, paused but a moment before he drew close to him and "fell on his neck and kissed him." "Oh, Master Leonard, Master Leonard, thank the good God, bless the blessed God; why we all thought you were dead in the war, and we have mourned for you many a day. But is it so? can it be that you are here and alive? Oh, Master Leonard, how glad, how thankful all the place will be; God bless you, Master Leonard." And the honest Reuben stood by the side of his long lost friend. They stood awhile; while the fading light of the half sculptured name, and the unmarked slab which would have commemorated and pale it rested there. The story came back to Reuben's mind,

and he found himself repeating it to himself, "Thus saith the LORD, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years."

But of Jessy and the parsonage Reuben had not the heart to speak, nor did he. And though much had happened between that visit to the church and what I must now mention, much had happened which I must presently tell—of grave or gay, of weal or woe, reader, it remains for you to see;—there is a little incident which had taken place at the hall which is worth recording, if indeed you are not quite tired and quite provoked with Mr. Loraine's stoicism, and Mrs. Loraine's weakness, and the governess's narrowness, and Maxwell's oddity.

This evening the party at the hall had spent as they did most evenings now-a-days rather silently since Leonard died: Mr. Loraine reading in his arm-chair "the education article" in "the Edinburgh" with his legs crossed, and the clearing of his throat occasionally making known the fact that he was there and in a singularly determined mood, not in the least prepared for weakness or nonsense; then Mrs. Loraine with her shawl over her shoulders sat working her worsted work, every now and then breaking out with a little complaining exclamation about the coldness of the evening or the draughtiness of the room. And Grace worked silently in a corner, thinking, and thinking, oh so much all about Jessy; she was the least clever of all the family, but the dearest, simplest little girl which words can

describe; and Alice was talking in an undertone to the governess at the table about "Faber on Prophecy and Louis Napoleon," and all were thinking of Leonard in a sort of unconscious way, for they seldom quite forgot him, all at least except the governess, and she as usual was thinking of herself and verifying her own opinions, for she seldom had room for any other thought. Maxwell had left the room to see after the horses which were to be ordered for an early hour to-morrow, and to see his own pony, and to steal down to the parsonage to ask how Jessy was, and to sit half an hour with Mr. Seymour—which he delighted in doing—and Mr. Seymour was delighted to see him and loved to laugh and talk when the boy was with him, so that you would never believe that poor Jessy was in the next room; and Maxwell would talk so freely and so intelligently to Mr. Seymour, that no one would believe he was the same boy who was so shy and reserved and silent at home, and with this view Maxwell had slipped down to the parsonage to-night. It was late, later than he usually came, for Maxwell had been asking after the horses and had been more than usually long in seeing to his pony.

He had set off at last from a little anxiety lest he should find the parsonage shut and Mr. Seymour gone to bed; as he turned into the churchyard gate he was surprised to see lights still shining in several windows of the parsonage, and still more astonished to notice figures and shadows passing to and fro by the windows. As Maxwell walked along he imagined he heard footsteps in the path before him which induced him to

quicken his pace, as he feared lest something was really the matter at the parsonage. The step approached and in a moment more he came upon a person who was walking quickly from the parsonage. "Is anything the matter?" said Maxwell; "is anyone ill? why are the lights moving now at the windows of the parsonage—Jessy?"

For Maxwell's mind was constantly filled with thoughts of Jessy. The stranger paused, and laid his hand on Maxwell's arm: Maxwell started. A boy is always half way to an adventurer if he is not half way to a coward, and the first impression of Maxwell was that something to do with Jessy was the cause of this unexpected interference. Our impressions take the form and mould of our general tendency of mind and thought. He had become so habitually accustomed to think of Jessy Seymour in a romantic point of view, that he was prepared to receive anything which might affect him in connection with her as an opportunity of knight-errantry.

But the hand was not withdrawn, and as a voice whispered Maxwell's name the boy started from another cause. "Leonard!" said Maxwell, in profound astonishment which made him start some paces back; but in another moment the voice which spoke, and was evidently a real and living voice, convinced Maxwell that in full reality his brother stood before him.

And Mr. Loraine sat reading by the fire, and Mrs. Loraine had said two or three times; "Where can

Maxwell be? It is getting so very late!" And Mr. Loraine had assured her he was quite safe; for Mrs. Loraine always believed people were dead if they were a minute beyond their time, and Mr. Loraine never believed they were dead if they were a week beyond their time. "Sir, how extraordinary it is we live a minute with such a complicated structure," said a lady to Abernethy. "Madam, with such a wonderful structure the wonder is we ever die," said Abernethy to the lady. It all depends on the things which our mind runs on. If it runs on robbers, wells, woods, cart ruts, runaway horses, and falling trees, then we always believe people are dead, for how can they live against such odds? If our mind runs on duties, dinner, bed, walking, riding and ordinary occurrences, then we believe no one is dead, for they will be sure to turn up. Such were the views Mr. and Mrs. Loraine took of life. There is no need to say that Mr. Loraine was generally right, Mrs. Loraine seldom; but she might be one day before she was seventy: and there are some people and some conditions to opinion which experience never teaches.

"Oh, my dear," said Mr. Loraine, turning in his chair and going on reading. But at that moment the footman opened the door, and Mr. Loraine was called out. "Your master wanted," said Mrs. Loraine, "what is the matter? Something has happened to Maxwell, I knew how it would be, and your papa never will see danger and is always so indifferent," continued she, talking partly to herself and partly to Alice and Grace, who were staying up that evening till Maxwell's return,

After a few anxious minutes the door opened, and Mr. Loraine entered with an expression on his countenance which with all her knowledge of him, Mrs. Loraine had never quite seen before.

He led her to her chair; "My dear," said he, his voice trembling.

"There is something the matter with Maxwell, I know," said she.

"Nothing," said he, "I assure you. But I have something to say which will require your calmness. My dear, God is very good."

What was coming? Mr. Loraine's manner was so unlike himself. Grace and Alice both rose and drew towards their father and mother, feeling sure that something was the matter; yet sorely perplexed, for their father's manner did not betoken ill news.

"God is very good," said he, "and sends mercies as unexpectedly sometimes as He does trials; only when we receive them, let us be so grateful for them that we devote our lives to Him the more earnestly and obediently."

There was a pause; in which Mr. Loraine put his hand to his eye. Was it to stop some errant tear? for no one ever saw Mr. Loraine shed one yet. Remember I am not saying that this is a good trait in a man, still it was the fact with Mr. Loraine.

And he began again, and there was no doubt that it had been a tear which he had stopped, for now his voice showed it.

Still he hesitated. Every one breathed quickly, and every hand remained fast where it had been—motion-

less, for all felt sure something had happened very unusual and yet that it would not be altogether sad. Even Mrs. Loraine was silent and quiet. There was a breathless stillness in the room, and the little dog did not wag his tail. He too was to be an actor in the scene in a way in which he did not anticipate.

"God is good," again said Mr. Loraine, "very good, and this I have said not to prepare you for bad news. I have to bid you gain as much calmness and self-possession as if I had—Leonard is yet alive," for it was impossible at such a moment for even one like Mr. Loraine to avoid falling into the forms of Scripture, and reverting to the types of his own case which the Bible contained. Of how many scenes of life is the Sacred Volume the mould and type! Mr. Loraine paused, as if the whole reserve of a long life were broken down forcibly by the mighty tide of human feeling which now beat so strongly and impetuously against it. God had indeed dealt mercifully with him. His beloved boy, his first-born son, whom he so loved and was so proud of, was given back to him rescued from the grave, and brought again to his home. What cause of endless gratitude! how few in this sad war had such a theme! All gave way before the force of circumstances, and Mr. Loraine caught up little Grace in his arms and pressing her dear, weeping, loving face to his lips as he drew her to his bosom, he said, "Yes, Leonard is yet alive, I shall go and see him before I die." And Mr. Loraine wept in the midst of his weeping and rejoicing family. And as they all wept and knelt together, for they all instinc-

tively fell on their knees, (accustomed from early childhood to acknowledge all as coming from God,) as they all knelt in wonder, yet in humble heartfelt gratitude; in wonder, for they did not yet know where Leonard was, probably still in the Crimea, "yet alive;" as they all knelt in gratitude and followed their father's earnest prayer, the door opened, and with his arm round Maxwell's shoulder, Leonard entered.

But these are not scenes for human words. Enough, the severed chain was linked, and the shattered wreath was bound once more that evening at prayers which they all offered together, while Leonard sat between his mother and Grace, one hand in each. Mr. Loraine did what he seldom did, chose a lesson from the Apocrypha:

"Now Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son. And when she espied him coming, she said to his father, Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him. Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die. And they wept both. Tobit also went forth toward the door, and stumbled: but his son ran unto him, and he wept, and said, Blessed art Thou, O God, and blessed is Thy Name for ever, and blessed are all Thine holy angels: For Thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me; for, behold, I see my son Tobias. And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media."

"Is yet alive," glorious words! full of unutterable joy! And are there some who loved like Jessy and Grace, to whom a Leonard returns from the scenes of this sad war! Are there some who say, "Oh, my God, let me but hear, 'he is yet alive.'" No bounds can ever be placed to my life-long gratitude." "Is yet alive;" then the sculptor's hand may be arrested in the Church, and the tear be stayed in the Hall.

Oh, what joy in a thousand saddened homes since one brief year ago would those words shed. Moonlight bursting from the darkest night; sunshine edging the deepest storm. Your husband did not die, as you imagine, at Alma; he yet lives and is in England. Your boy, your noble, loving, gallant boy, did not fall in the trenches; it was an error; he is on his way home. He will be here presently. "Is yet alive, and you may go and see him before you die."

But you poor silent mourners over your quiet, distant dead; who are really dead! sorrow not as those without hope. Oh no; he "is yet alive:" for, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the LORD: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

And did not he for whom you mourn "believe in Him!" died not without faith? His patient death, his firm sense of duty, his love of God, his quiet, willing devotion to his duty when that duty led him into scenes of certain peril and death, yet he did not shrink; his earnest prayer, his indifference to the world's scoff if he did what he knew was right; did not all that

show he "believed in Him?" You know it does; and if so, "he is yet alive;" lives for ever and ever. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." "To him that overcometh will I give the crown of life." And he overcame Satan, sin, the world and self in all that life which you so admired and so loved. "He that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end;" *to the end*. And did not he? Then can you doubt "he is yet alive." No; for "faithful is He that promised;" "He cannot deny Himself:" He does not wish "the death of the sinner;" "Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out."

"Yet alive!" safe from sin, safe from Satan, safe from falling, safe in the fold, never able to fall again, quite safe and waiting for you. He cannot alter, you need now only think of preparing yourself; he no longer needs your prayers in the way he did, for his work is done. And what he was when he fell he is now; you were his, and he yours. And so you *are* his and he *is* yours.

"He is yet alive," alive to perfect peace, to the memory of you, recollecting every scene in which he was with you, remembering with joy your struggle against the great power of evil, and looking onward to the re-union when the kingdom of CHRIST is established; and alive to the glories of that coming state when CHRIST shall reign for ever and ever. He is alive, only somewhat nearer the eternal glory than you are, somewhat closer to it, and not yet made perfect, that he without you may not be made perfect. There-

fore the finish of your character will finish his, and the more quickly you approach the discipline and conquest of self, the more quickly will he enter his perfect rest above.

But you say, "but I cannot add, 'I shall see him before I die.'" No, nor can you in the ordinary sense of the word. But there are many ways in which you may : pray to God, and you go to see him ; approach the same God he is approaching, and you especially mingle with him in a common act of worship and praise. Fix your settled hours of devotion and intercession, the hours of the Church in the passing day. In the midst of the stir and business of the day you may ever and anon draw aside and in the quiet room, the silent retreat which becomes associated with the morning, noon, and evening lights, the fading twilight and evening lamp, you will "go to see him," and find him awaiting you like a silent, kind, and loving form, with the eye fixed on you and the whole heart full of sympathy with your sorrows and your trials ; and daily and often in the day you will go and see him "before you die." Often before you die, and when you die you will be with him for ever. Or do what he used to do ; visit the poor he visited, relieve the sick, fulfil the daily task of love and mercy and in the cottage of the poor or the chamber of the sick you will find him ; in continuing his work, you will feel you are with him. You will draw aside from the distractions, or lack of sympathy or monotony of home life and find him. An echo of the other world, a ray, a glow from the home to which you go. So you will "go to see him before you die : " and

in going on mastering the difficulties which you used to master and strive against with him, you will "go to see him." In continuing the same struggle of life and watching your success in overcoming the faults and infirmities which you used to determine to overcome in conjunction with him, you will "go to see him before you die."

And if he died somewhat suddenly, in the midst of battle, and when he left home he was gay, thoughtless, and careless; refused to listen to your advice, and seemed unaffected by your prayers and teaching; take comfort. God does not *will* the death of a sinner, and sometimes by the boding of coming death, and sometimes by the powerful example and influence of another He brings to repentance shortly before dying the very one for whom parents and friends had pleaded, they thought, in vain. God finds us out in scenes where we little expect Him. The Good Shepherd is going on tracking the wandering sheep long after we think he is finally lost in the wilderness and the mountain; and when your son went to the Crimea, He followed him, watched him, tracked his wandering path. "Put my tears into Thy bottle, and write these things, even penitence, in Thy book," and the earnest feeling, the holy ambition, the devout communion, the word of pleading with a godless companion, the acts perhaps of the evening before Inkermann, or the Redan, will be remembered at the Judgment by Him who "knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are but dust." One day is with Him as a thousand years, and He can read the heart and scan the extent of past

difficulties and present penitence in a way in which we could not do in passing ages. Take comfort, then, poor mourner, in having heard of the one prayer offered, or the one Communion received by him whom you loved, and though he were the Joseph, the Benjamin of your family, he may be "yet alive," and you will go to see him when you die.

This was part of a sermon preached in Brandon Church about this time, though I could not find out who preached it. It evidently has no trace of Mr. Seymour's style, and would not perhaps entirely echo the sentiments and judgment of that good man.

So Leonard had returned, and the Parsonage, the Church, and the Hall had all seen him, and in them all a light had been shed through God's great mercy. Of what was going on in each I have yet to speak, for there were indeed shadows and very dark ones which hung over at least the Parsonage. And John Dennis had returned, and he too had shed joy and gladness over his home. And though we have no special mention made of how Mrs. Mulso received the news at the cottage, and how Mrs. Thorburn looked when she opened the note which contained the extraordinary news that morning at breakfast, still we can fancy the effect of the intelligence on Mrs. Mulso's mind, and her putting it down as another extraordinary illustration of things in the day in which she was doomed to live.

"In her time who ever heard of dead officers coming to life again, or of those for whom friends had put on mourning coming back alive and well. The Duke never would have suffered it, perhaps would have shot

a man in order to verify an official list, or cashiered him for not having been bayoneted at Badajoz, if authority had once said he had been. And those were good old times. But my poor Jessy, has she heard of his return? Why does not my brother come down and see us and tell us what he knows? I am half-inclined to think it was a plot of that Miss Loraine from the beginning. I believe she is capable of having got up the report for some reason or other."

"Not of her own brother!" said Mrs. Thorburn.

"Oh, yes, it is the more *severe* line, and *severity* is everything now-a-days. Oh yes! Well, nevertheless, I should like to have seen the meeting much! Why it must have been equal to Hermione in the 'Winter's Tale:'

"Chide me, dear stone, that I may say, indeed
Thou art Hermione.

Be stone no more.

Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
I'll fill your grave up: stir—nay, come away;
Bequeath to death your memory, for from him,
Dear life redeem you—
Lead us from hence; where we may leisurely
Each one demand, and answer to his part,
Performed in this wide gap of time, since first
We were dissevered."

"But here comes Maxwell."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CAPTIVITY.

BUT the questions to be answered through many a long winter's evening and over many a Christmas hearth—while eager children sit with hands on knees to hear the oft told tale, and formless shadows gambol on the wall, and chesnuts crack with slumberous sound upon the glowing embers, and favourite spaniels doze upon the rug, and winter winds are quarrelling loudly outside the window, and crickets chirp beneath the warm hearth-stone—questions to be answered on many such a night, when you, reader, will not be there, must be answered for you now; where have Leonard and John Dennis been? and what is the history of their strange appearance now?

And before we go further, remember, I have not said it was Leonard's children, or Cicely's, or Allen's who are to listen to all these winter's tales, so do not imagine that for aught said here Leonard and Jessy are ever to be one: for the chances and changes of this war are great, and many is the fair vessel which its storms have beaten into harbour with shattered timbers and lagging windless sail. But all that anon.

Those happy days when after battles and war itself is over eager children ask for the oft told tale and never tire to hear of anguish and hairsbreadth escapes, of perils and ghastly scenes which wounded soldiers never tire to tell! How happy will be the day to many more when that day comes for them; as good Mrs.

Mulso would have said about it, as on some summer day she flung open her French window to the balcony and gathered a cluster of China roses which hung so coyly in at the window, and the grey church tower stood out on the sloping hill seen beneath the canopy of cool horse-chesnut boughs which shadowed the turf and flower borders under the burning June sun, as she would have said then, speaking of those to whom news of peace would bring little joy—for she ever took the sadder view of things and especially of war—

“Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers
To-day might I, hanging on Hotspur’s neck
Have talked of Monmouth’s grave.”

And now where have the wanderers been? for that they have been “long a coming” is plain to all, and must have been painfully so to those with whom we are but interested as the heroes of a tale of yesterday, whose events of weal and woe will be to us ere long but “as a post which hasteth by or as a stranger who tarrieth but a day.”

And that we may see what tales of yore Leonard may have to tell at the hall, and John Dennis by the cottage hearth, we must go back awhile to the Crimea. We left them after Inkermann. The long protracted siege wore as heavily to them as to us at home; the constant sound of distant cannonades, the occasional near explosion of shells, the genuine flashes of mirth and merriment in the midst of trouble and danger which showed how truly the British could suit himself to London dissipation, or the march of Balaclava, and

be yet the same, the arrival of the *Times* with the account of what happened at the Crimea, or circumstances noted down by critical or sceptical minds to see how far "our own correspondent" on such a day was Mr. Russell, or some one who at the moment that he saw "our brave fellows coming out of the trenches," was in the act of walking down Grosvenor street. All these kinds of things occupied the mind and interest of men in the Crimea as much as they did us at home.

We always fancy that every one in the war knows everything which is happening, knows each gun which is fired, knows all the plans of the commander-in-chief on both sides, knows all the history of the wounded, knows all the emperor of Russia is intending to do, and has maps of the whole future campaign for the next year to come, all done by Wyld after the last newest fashion; we fancy that each drummer at Balaclava is intimate with the Princess Olga, and is more than half a counsellor at the Russian council-chamber; we imagine that every private who is marched out of our village by the recruiting sergeant and cried after by Dolly and Peggy, the moment he gets to the scene of war, is writing in the same tent with Sir William Codrington who is whispering into his ears the gravest apophthegms of war and strategy; whereas, those out there know less about the matter than we do; and a wounded sergeant at Balaclava seizes the *Times* with the utmost avidity to see what "our own correspondent" says about the battle he fought in last, to find out whereabouts he stood himself, and to discover where in fact the wound was which he had had a vague ima-

gination was somewhere in his thigh. Well! in this state of things Leonard remained after Inkermann, reading the *Times*, walking in the Inkermann road, and gazing at the sea. The trenches became the all-absorbing employment, and Leonard had to take his share—a work so wonderfully borne and entered on by so many of our men with such patience and heroism.

The trench work was very hard; at first dreadful from the extreme cold and great difficulty of getting provisions, which lying stored up at Balacava could only be got to the army over the deep mud and through the heavy ruts which intervened between the trenches and Balacava; the mortality among the soldiers was appalling especially among the recruits, who coming out fresh from England were quite unseasoned and died by hundreds. The poor fellows dug holes in the earth to hide themselves from the pitiless wind and the bitter inclemency of the weather; and they might be seen continually with their ragged dress and feet nearly bare pacing the wet mud, or wrapt in a single blanket, they shivered through the livelong night; “when relieved, they crept back,” says an observer, “to the bleak shelter of their tents; while horrible cramps resembling cholera, seized numbers of those exposed, sometimes for night after night in succession, to guard the trenches.” In December and January alone the sick varied from 2000 to 3000, and the sick returns included first and last 14,000 men ineffective in the British army alone. The trenches must be held at every cost or trouble; or the vast preparations, the high excitement and promise of last year, the blood of Alma and Inkermann had

been spent and spilt in vain. Leonard bore up wonderfully under these accumulated difficulties; he was the universal favourite of all the officers who knew him, and was ever foremost in going through his duty cheerfully; many a time he had witnessed scenes which made his blood curdle within him at the nearness of death and the sternness of human suffering.

One night he had gone down on his accustomed duty in the trenches; the night was dark and cold to freezing; the lurid light of the frequent missiles of war, and explosions blazed at the intervals of every few minutes in the air; the long dark lines of the trenches every now and then edged by the red line of fire seen beyond them, and then standing out dark against the sky, gave a graphic appearance to the scene of action. Two or three times shells had exploded near the working party in which Leonard stood, but without any damage being done to life; the men continued unceasingly at their work, although a worse night for firing had seldom been felt since the beginning of the siege. One man particularly had attracted Leonard's notice by the fearful way in which he was swearing and blaspheming God. The men around seemed to be appalled at it, but he continued despite the continual explosions around which might have made a stouter spirit quail, and to which many a dark sinful habit had succumbed.

The man in question was working next another who at first had been his companion also in his blasphemy, but the incessant explosions of the fatal implements around them for the time made him cease.

"What, have you turned saint?" said his companion,

as with another oath he gave the next stroke to his work.

"Not saint yet, but I'm not quite an infidel, neither, and this is no time to be daring God or devil, if there be either."

"Then as I believe in neither I fear neither," said the other, and pausing an instant he pointed to a shell at that moment ascending with its whirring whizzing noise. The oaths which were pouring in volleys from his lips were scarcely complete when the shell exploded, and a fragment of it struck the poor blasphemer on his mouth; the unfinished oath was stopped by the angry hand of God, and the wretched man fell back, his face a mass of blood, upon the ground, the offending member struck in the very instant of its offence. A pause for a moment followed; all seemed struck by the terrible interference of the Almighty to avenge His law on the sinner. They say that somewhere in the great universe of God every sound which has been ever uttered still vibrates on and on into boundless space; that every sound of the human voice, from Cain's first defence of his murder of his brother to the swearer who blasphemed God yesterday, is still ringing somewhere though far beyond the ken of him that uttered it, or the reach of the objects of this natural world, and will vibrate on till time and space shall be no more; *then* they will be heard as the still sounding echoes of the past at the bar of a present and avenging Judge. That swearer's half finished oath, cut short by the blast of death, is sounding somewhere still, and by its very half finished form is echoing to

endless space the fact that the swearer, died impenitent. But the pause had scarcely ceased, and Leonard had stepped forward to urge the men to go on with their work, when a party of Russians who had been lurking near, took advantage of the momentary suspension of watchfulness and suddenly dashed into the trench; a sharp contest ensued. Leonard acted with the coolness and courage for which he had been marked throughout, but it was on this occasion in vain; his arm fell wounded by the stroke of a ball, and in the confusion incident on it he was made prisoner. Dennis who was of the company, was thus a second time in the hands of his enemies.

The prisoners were quickly despatched to Sebastopol, to be thence transmitted to the heart of Russia. Leonard with his companions were first conveyed into Sebastopol. It was night; the glare of light from the continued explosions still illumined the sky, and made the horrors around him more and more visible and terrible; as he went along the dead lay in ghastly heaps around; on the walls and parapets bodies lay sometimes as if having thrown themselves down to sleep, with one arm over the forehead and the other hanging by the side, but a look would tell that it was the sleep of death; and the open eye which still glared up towards the sky told by its glazed stare that the last anguish was past. Here lay two or three together struck down by the fire poured on them, lying one on another, the arms dangling over the bosom of a comrade, or the hand grasping the hair which floated back from the pale forehead. Some showed the care of a comrade in attempting to give them

something like the appearance of being out for burial. They lay like soldiers, with an awe and glory in their upturned faces, and their blood-stained uniforms which no pall or coffin could bestow.

Pausing at these sad groups, on to more than one of which our friends had to see new victims fall, cut down by the terrible sickle of war, as they passed to the city; their's was a gloomy prospect. As they advanced the town lay before them like an awful dream. The heavy smoke lurid with incessant fire; the intense darkness made more apparent by the streams of fire which shot up through the air; the tremendous and deep bellowings of the guns, which seemed to heave up their sounds from the very bowels of the earth; the melancholy stillness which succeeded the intervals of the reports, and which hung over the midnight city like the doom of heaven; the occasional outbreak of a flame as some house in the town caught fire, or the last smouldering flame in some building whose gutted and blackened walls stood out against the red light, relieved in gaunt, skeleton-like grimness—appeared all like the several parts of a nightmare, in which the reason has been crushed by the frenzied imagination, refusing to let her rise to utter one note of hope or peace.

In the midst of such stupendous sights and acts all mere human acts sink to small importance; and amid the roar of guns and the blaze of fires the figures of men as they moved to and fro, or the cries of the wounded, and the deep breathings of the dying, attracted but little notice. Sebastopol lay before them

like a grave over which had risen in ghastly proportions the spectre of the departed.

Once Leonard was obliged to pause, as those who conducted him were making way for them to climb the wall; a figure of a dying man lay in the way. As the conductor of the little party stooped to remove somewhat roughly the body of the wounded soldier, a cry broke from his lips, deep, but low and suppressed. Leonard sprang forward to alleviate the result of the rough treatment, and stooped to place the head of the poor fellow in an attitude of a little ease; a look of gratitude lit up his face as he murmured the Russian cry for "water." Leonard did not know what to do, but pointing to him and laying hold of the arm of the man who was conducting them, tried to make him understand; but the man answered angrily, and they moved on leaving the wounded Russian in his anguish. There was something in the contrast between the gigantic features of the night around, and the low and quiet sufferings of a single human being, whose form lay neglected in the enormous masses of ruin and destruction, which touched Leonard. Yet in all these vast masses of horror which brooded round; the fires, the thunder of guns, the lurid smoke, the blazing buildings, and the darkness, there was no consciousness; in that one suffering form, what consciousness was there not? the agony of pain, the memories of dying, the remembered home, the wife so far away, and the children so much loved! As Leonard turned to look, he saw against the fire the arm of the poor fellow once uplifted, and then fall down heavily in

death ; and when he looked again he only saw a motionless heap of clothes. Amid the stupendous monuments of nature and art the human being is but an unit, yet his destiny is *eternal*, while the scenes of nature will pass away into the realms of oblivion and shadows.

The prisoners were housed well in the town ; though it was terrible work passing through the streets ; the scenes of death and suffering, ruin and destruction which lay around were enough to appal the boldest hearts. As they passed the hospital some poor fellows—hideously mutilated—were being carried in on stretchers, moaning piteously ; while down the streets in the distance more companies with stretchers and wounded were seen advancing. It was a great harvest and a bloody one. The interior of that hospital was revealed to sight afterwards, when on the capture of the Redan and the Malakoff, our men entered the town ; the account of that interior will ever remain among the most hideous passages of this war.

Early in the morning the prisoners were sent to Simpheropol. The captain who commanded the body was a talkative, conversible man enough ; he seemed to enjoy making himself agreeable, and as he could speak a little English Leonard soon found that he would not find his journey at all so dull and unpleasant as it might otherwise have been.

The distance was far, 270 miles to Ekaterinoslav, to which place they were first going. The food was poor, scarcely more than black bread, which was coarse and not nutritious ; and for this the prisoners were allowed

a certain sum daily, which they were left to lay out as they thought best; but the money was obliged to be expended through the medium of the soldiers who guarded them, who soon reduced the allowance which would have been enough in itself, to a very small sum. Some of the poor fellows who had set out wounded, and scarcely able to bear the fatigue of the journey, broke down from exhaustion by the road-side; a few were taken into hospitals which they passed, but many died long before they reached their destination.

Leonard occasionally got into conversation with the captain, some parts of which were amusing enough.

Captain. "It is strange that you can't be contented with your government, but should run your heads into this trouble. Siberia is a poor home for those who have had a better."

Leonard hesitated. "I would fight and die for the government under which I live."

Captain. "Then why do you revolt against the czar?"

Leonard. "The czar is no king to me. I own no authority in him over me."

Captain. "Why, are you not an English?"

Leonard. "Yes, an English officer; and I am proud to own it."

Captain. "Well, and the English is the best of all the czar's provinces as they say; London, I have heard say, is a finer town than Moscow. The czar went to visit his province in England a little while since."

By this time Leonard discovered that his friend was under the conviction that all the countries of Europe

were provinces of Russia, and owed obedience and fealty to the czar.

"And those French," continued the captain, half to himself, "they were better off than the eastern provinces; the czar would have managed to punish the Turks for their rebellion if they had not called in the other provinces to their aid, but they only wait to know what it is to rebel against so merciful and good a king."

Leonard. "The czar is no king of ours. He is a despot, and we have come to arrest the progress of his tyranny."

Captain. "You are bold to speak against your own monarch in so determined a manner; it is your living in so distant a province which is the reason. But the day will come when you will find your error. Do you know that all the English and French are to be sent to Siberia? and that Tobolsk is preparing room for their governors Napoleon and Victoria who have betrayed their trust; it will be cold and dreary work. The czar intends to build a great palace like the Kremlin at London, and to visit it yearly by sailing down the Baltic, as soon as he has quelled this wicked rebellion. The Princess Olga is to have Ireland as her portion."

Leonard. "Really—I have not heard of all this before."

Captain. "No; but the czar is reserved and does not betray his great intentions; indeed he does not always know them himself, for he is governed by a law which he cannot control. But he lives in the hearts of his people and that is enough."

Leonard. "What law but his own will governs the czar?"

Captain. "Oh, the ancient plans and policy of the great empress and the czar Peter, and the law by which God made Russia the centre and ruler of the world. There is no going against God; and if He has ordained the eternal greatness of Russia, there is no rebellion which can prevail against her."

Leonard. "What, then, do you say to Alma and Inkermann?"

Captain. "Oh, at Alma we were surprised and withdrew towards the last on purpose to let the English rebels fall into the snare; at Inkermann we only wished to ascertain the strength and power of the lines, and withdrew when we were satisfied, not wishing to waste more blood."

Leonard. "Well, yours is a new view of the case, which never had struck me before—certainly."

Captain. "See, there—there is the power of the czar."

Leonard looked round, just as a loud voice saying "Beware!" struck on his ear. They were approaching a small village—but few of which they had yet passed through in their long journey. A high platform rose before them; a crowd of people were standing round; on the platform was standing a man with a long lash, made of leather, suspended from a stick of the same length; the leather was knotted: "Beware!" again cried the man. Another glance showed Leonard a poor wretch standing with his hands bound, and his back bare, waiting to receive the dreaded lash. The execu-

tioner uplifted his whip, and it descended, leaving a long blue mark from the left shoulder to the right hip; the victim did not flinch. Again the cry "Beware" was raised, and two minutes elapsed, when the second lash fell making the same long blue line from the right shoulder to the left hip; a slight quiver might be noticed through the poor wretch's frame. Another pause—and the old repeated cry. The third lash was over the first scar which in an instant started asunder, and blood flowed copiously from the ghastly wound; a yell of agony burst from the lips of the sufferer. The fourth lash accomplished the same for the other side, when the same shriek followed. The fifth laid open the back, and the poor fellow sank senseless on the platform. A surgeon approached and pronounced that he could bear no more yet, that he must be conveyed back to prison, and might be well enough to receive the remaining lashes the next day—when the condition of the wounds would make the punishment the more terrible. Again the executioner shouted "Beware!" and the victim was borne to his grim repose.

"What is this?" said Leonard.

"The Czar," said the other: "this is a peasant who was ordered to join the army, and he escaped; he will go to Siberia after he has received his flogging."

"Do they not like the army, then? our men," said Leonard, "join voluntarily and gladly."

"No—they love the Czar, but they hate the army; it is hard work to keep them from running back to their wives and children. They have twenty years of it if they join and may not return till then; they have

poor chance of seeing them again in this world. Very likely this man left a wife and five or six children with whom he had lived for years, and was suddenly told to join when the war began."

"Are, then, the men fond of their families among you?"

"Fond, yes: no province of the czar is more full of peasants who love home than this is; they will work night and day for each other, and die, if it is needful."

They moved on. "Surely the very intercourse of our fellows with this miserable population must do good, and show what may be done and realised by a free government: if the war does no other good it will do that." So thought Leonard.

The next day the poor wretch died under the lash, and his wife and children did see him no more.

The journey became long and tedious, several died on the road, though the Russian authorities were usually kind and attentive to the prisoners as they passed. The various modes of extortion and peculation were so vast and multifarious, that it ended in being equivalent to real cruelty to the poor fellows. Their small allowance went but a small way. Leonard found the way very much cheered by the conversation of his companion, and he received much attention from the fact of his being an officer. At length with much toil and difficulty they reached Ekaterinoslav. The journey had not been thrown away upon Leonard; he had gleaned much information as to Russian life and manners, and the condition and working of their government. They were quickly sent on to Moscow; where

Leonard himself was most hospitably and kindly received in the house of a Russian noble, who seemed determined that at least the prisoners should bear away a good report of their treatment in the land of the enemy. Leonard soon ingratiated himself with the family, and found himself quickly liked and popular. It was a matter of no small joy to him that he procured leave for Dennis to be in the same house with himself.

The person in whose house Leonard was quartered, was a person of high position and influence. The hold which the young prisoner gained over his hosts was such as to interest them strongly in his favour, and after a time his host undertook to attempt his liberation and to gain permission for his return. The first hope which was raised of this kindled at once in Leonard's mind the most ardent desire for its fulfilment. He of course heard nothing from home, and the letters he did attempt to smuggle through the ordinary channels to England, were intercepted by the vigilance of Russian police, and never reached their destination. The desire to reach home increased with his prolonged absence, to an intensity which became deeply painful. A thousand anxious thoughts and surmises occupied his mind, and he imagined troubles and sorrows at home for which he had no ground or warrant.

Had he known that the news of his death had reached Brandon owing to the impression in his regiment that that was the case; and had he been aware of the sad consequences of the receipt of the intelligence, his hours of captivity would have been saddened indeed. Distance from an object we are interested in seems to bring that

object to our mind in only one aspect: the possible sorrows and troubles which may be passing their shadows across it, until at length we hope or conceive no other possible condition for it, and make its woeful and sadder condition the necessary attribute of its existence.

Week after week passed by as Leonard's kind friends were using influence at court to gain the wished-for permission. The fluctuations of hope and despair were continual and long, and dreary captivity seemed opening out before our heroes, when one morning his host entered Leonard's room, holding the letter in his hand which he had received from head-quarters granting the permission to Leonard and Dennis to return to England. The joy of such moments is better imagined than described, nor is the imagination very possible for those who have never occupied the position. One feature is striking on such occasions. Every wish and desire is absorbed in the one of liberty and return; those at home think that there will be a lingering interest in the war, a fond attachment for its scenes, a realization of the feelings of the prisoner of Chillon, that "even I regain my freedom with a sigh;" that there will be so great a halo of romantic glory about the scene of danger and interest, that even home will be a little pallid and a little dull. But all such passes away before the reality; every feeling, wish, and thought blends into the one delight of "going home."

Despite the passport and permission our friends found it no easy matter to reach and cross the frontier. Several times they were conscious of being closely watched, and that persons who appeared to be merely ordinary

fellow-travellers, or attendants, were in fact spies upon their movements and conversations.

But they crossed the frontier and made their way with all speed to England. With anxious feelings and hesitating steps Leonard approached his old home. The events which had crowded into the interval made the time appear threefold. It was approaching evening when he entered Brandon; the quiet church-tower was the first object which greeted his eye from the gate which brought him into the village, and the first sound which welcomed him was the sound of its well-known chime. Jessy—Cicely—Maxwell, where were they all? He paused, and gazed upon the quiet tower; he feared to go, and yet he longed. Some way in the trees the Parsonage nestled and the tower rose over it, speaking out its chimes, as if it would tell Leonard that they all were there whom he loved. Yet its calm monotony told no more, no chance or change of human life; gazing as it did alike at Jessy in her quiet room and Leonard by the gate. Two little children came along the road, and gazed up at the young soldier, and Leonard realised in a moment the new importance with which he had become invested. This little incident turned the current of his thoughts, and speaking to the children he pursued his course along the winding lane, and under the hedge-row towards the church. Partly from the strong sense of gratitude to God, and that he should repair first to His House to thank Him for His mercies, and partly from the nervous fear of answering the anxious question, "What has happened since I went away?" he entered the church, as we already

know ; and the first object which met his eye was the tomb sculptured with his own name ! Strange vicissitudes of life ! Strange paradoxes of war ; a tomb erected for the living, and for the countless dead scarcely a grave. Mourners by hearth and altar for one whose footsteps are already sounding on his native beach, and for the grim forms in the vast chambers of death and the besieged city, no murmur at all ; a village weeping for one only imagined dead, and 50,000 dead with scarce a funeral tear. A nation's holocaust to the demands of lust.

CHAPTER XL.

BEST.

CICELY too came home. Her work had been one of duty and love, not of ostentation. The only difference about her nature and Leonard's was that it was perfectly unexcited. She had been out several weeks, and had become intimately acquainted with the working of the hospital system there, and with many of those excellent women who were so nobly doing the work of God. She disappointed grievously all those who connected her mission with any very high-flown ideas of self-devotion or a great future. She had given a vent to her sense of duty and felt the happier for it. Her family were prepared for her return : "My dearest father, I shall be at Brandon Station by the train arriving at 3.35. from London. How happy I shall

be to be with you all again. How much we shall have to say to each other."

Such was the whole excitement got up by Cicely on her return. But her work was done. She had found a safety-valve for her yearning, the yearning of practical duty.

Poor Jessy, well had it been for her if she had found the same. Long, very long were the hours of anxiety which hung over the watchers by Jessy's couch. Whether life or death was to be the end of that sad interval, it was hard to say.

For many hours she lay unconscious of all passing events, and memory only seemed to resume its seat ever and anon to recall some floating unconnected accident of the past. But whatever she spoke of, she never spoke of Leonard. Maxwell she often spoke of and by his name, though hitherto she had always called him "Leonard." She often began to speak of some past incident of the war which remained in vivid colours upon her mind; of Alma or Inkermann, or the horrors of war, or the landing of the troops. But they were ever floating units, separate and disconnected, flickering flares of light which curled off into empty air without even the consolidation of a flame.

Mrs. Thorburn was constantly with her, and her voice seemed to be most powerful and effective in recalling Jessy to herself. But at first it was ever to talk of Ruth or of Rizpah, or some sadder tale of human suffering and woe which found a sympathy in her mind.

Leonard came daily and sat through livelong hours with Mr. Seymour, and listened to catch some sound

of Jessy's voice above—he never saw her. He did not know how much she loved him. He did not know how deep had been the hold of that tenacious heart on him.

But he had come back a wiser man than he went. He had learnt much in that war school, as many others did too. And the deeper lessons of his life all tended to give him wider sympathies and kindlier affections. So experience ever does to the good and the improving.

The village was receiving back again its long-lost residents. The future was uncertain, and the war still lasted and seemed to widen in its dimensions and proportions.

Lights, too, were seen shooting to and fro in Mr. Randall's melancholy home, and news were afloat that the clergyman had returned from the Crimea, and that strange things had happened to him; that he had seen "the ghost of his departed wife," as the housekeeper confidently affirmed, "who had told him the day and hour of his coming death, and how that a Russian magician or boyar," the housekeeper did not know which, "had explained the vision to him and assured him of its truth."

Some said that he would never be seen again; but had come back to lock himself up in close confinement and solitude on account of the old sin which he had had brought more strongly and vividly to him in some scene in the war.

"That he had come back to discharge his servants and sell his furniture," as Mr. Philpott with his usual kindness said, "for that Mr. Randall had got largely into debt at Balaclava."

"To go on with his melancholy, Romanist, Phari-
saical ways, and to plot against the purity of Christi-
anity, and the foundations of the Church," as Mrs.
Mulso said, "having got some special dispensation
from the Patriarch for the purpose."

To "preach next Sunday on the war? Yes, gladly,
my dear Mr. Seymour, and to do anything which may
bind up the broken-hearted, and add to the happiness
of my fellow-parishioners, from which I once too much
cut myself off hitherto," said Mr. Randall; and I am
speaking now of some time after Leonard's return.

"Randall is the better for his campaign," said Mr.
Seymour, laughing, "the war has brought him out,
and made him shake off some of his peculiarities. He
is an *excellent* man, sir."

Mr. Randall had returned an altered man; one thing
only he refused ever to give to light,—the revelations
made to him by the dying soldier on the field.

And there were two sermons preached next Sunday,
Mr. Randall's in the morning, and Mr. Seymour's in
the evening; for it was a day which Mr. Seymour, good
man, had suggested to the people that they should
specially set apart for the purpose of thanking God
for His great mercy in bringing so many back to the
village in safety.

And surely a very natural thing to do, for a parish
is an integral portion of the church, with its Holy
Home in the centre, with its long record of saints gone
by for many a past year; whose graves recal to mind

the patient death, and whose names are engraved on children's recollections for their holy life and kind and honest walk: and it has its own calendar, its own "Communion of Saints," its own distinctive features and peculiarities, its own mode of keeping holy Seasons; its own Easter, Christmas, and Whitsuntide, which it keeps with all the church around it. So why should not a village keep its own day of gratitude and commemoration for its own blessings, and its own mercies received?

And Brandon had received many blessings.

"God forbid," said Mr. Randall in his sermon, "that I should magnify, what some people call in the extravagant philosophy of the day so new and painful to many minds, the blessings and happiness of war; or should fling the shafts of an embittered and acrimonious spirit against those many persons who have followed their calling in peace, and may have fallen in with the fashion of an age from natural lack of individuality and originality of character. I would not bring to their door the chastisement we have received, or at least not while I myself was enjoying the repose, and perhaps indulging many of those sickly infirmities of an over-wrought fancy which have rather led to bitterness against others than to the reformation of self."

Here Maxwell looked at Cicely, for the remark reminded him of a poem called "Maud," which they were reading last night, and about which Cicely had said something of the same kind as that which the preacher was saying now. But Cicely did not return the significant look, but looked straight down on her

"Sunday Services," while Maxwell, feeling awkward, frowned and looked up at the Caryatides, and would have hummed an air of one of Verdi's Operas if he had not been in church.

"Nor would I join with those who will cling with such tenacity to the prejudices and modes of a past day that they try the circumstances of the present war by their standard only, and find no sympathy with that keener analysis of feeling and opinion into which the onward tide of civilisation and development has drifted the men of to-day—our age is one far in advance of the past, and every incident in it must partake of that advance. A searching and anxious inquiry has taken the place of the more calm and implicit trust of the last generation, and individualism is manifested in all directions in the inquiry which each one seems to feel it his right to make into each event which occurs. The world is more one than it was. It no longer is exposed to the danger to which it was of severed and independent fragments of a divided whole. Men realize that they belong to one family; and distinctions of nations, and the passage of years no longer exist as severing circumstances in the way in which they did. Even patriotism is blending into cosmopolitanism, or more truly the spread of Christianity and of the Church is fast gathering the sons of man round one common centre. We may not judge the events and accidents of this war by those of the last any more than we may try the conditions of practical science of this century by the amount of human knowledge and experience gained in the last."

Here Mr. Randall pausing, Alice gave Maxwell a slight push with the hassock and looked up to a square pew in the gallery across where Mrs. Mulso always sat in front, for Alice thought of how Mrs. Mulso was so fond of running down the features of the present war, and thought that Mr. Randall must "mean her." But Mrs. Mulso was reading out of a large folio prayer-book, bound in dark blue and gilt, with the large type on thick, shining, glossy paper; and she was reading a long MS. written on the fly sheet in ink which now was yellow, and the MS. professed to be transcribed from a volume of "Blair's Sermons;" and Mrs. Mulso seemed to be paying no heed to Mr. Randall's very excellent and thoughtful discourse; and by her evident forgetfulness of manner it was clear that she did not altogether agree with his opinions. Maxwell took no notice of Alice's kick except to frown and draw his leg away, as if the hassock might derange his very well arranged dress, a matter by the way in which Maxwell had become of late specially interested; and Alice felt awkward in her turn, and Mr. Randall went on.

"But war has its wonderful lessons; it does its great good to society; it is not without its blessings. It destroys selfishness, and brings out those traits of yearning and will to help others which are so beautiful, and so often are obliterated in the long season of peace. In peace men are led to think of self, in war they think of others. Peace is unfortunately not a time of high principle, war much oftener is. Severe circumstance brings out high principle, gives it shape; it does not offer the same opportunity for breaking

down old severe limits of truth and purity. But while we thus apologize for war, God forbid we should hail it as a blessing, and do aught to deery the glorious gift of peace."

Here Cicely did look up at the governess, for she could not help it, for they had been reading last night that passage in "Maud," where the poet says—

"Peace sitting under the olive, and blessing the days gone by,
When the poor are levell'd and hustled together, each sex, like
swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes! but a company forges the wine."

And really this seemed so strange an apostrophe about peace, from a man occupying the first poet's place in a great Christian country, that Cicely was indignant; but the governess would like it, and believed it was admirable; she specially delighted in the two lines,

"Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land or sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones."

These the governess thought delightful; "so bitter, so severe, so acrimonious, so sharp, so cutting," she said.

"So unchristian," said Cicely.

"So like the glorious old puritans," said the governess, "who were ever delighting in cutting hip and thigh, and buckled on the armour with the hand which grasped the Bible. I hate peace," said the governess, rising and placing her small modicum of work into a

small box, and she cleared her throat and without a word left the room.

This all happened last night, and it was singular how Mr. Randall's sermon fell into this tone.

And Mr. Seymour preached on the same subject that evening. The church was very full, very. It was natural; all hearts were full of the war, and some had cause of great rejoicing; and many of deep sorrow, and the church was the natural home for all. "Is any merry, let him sing psalms." "The LORD was ready to save me, therefore will we sing our songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD."

So all came, as you will see, for Mr. Seymour, good man, knew all his people well, and so well that as he looked round the church in preaching he could not help thinking of each case there, and of how he could administer comfort to this grief and that, to this difficulty and that.

So having wiped his spectacles he began, just after the hymn, in which all joined, so that the whole church with its hot air, and its bright shining candles seemed full of jubilant sounds to every corbel and rafter.

His object in his very simple, yet touching discourse, was to say something applicable to each and all.

"It is a very blessed thing, good people, that we are here met together again to praise our good God for being brought on hitherto; for indeed like the holy patriarch of old we have had cause to stand up from our hearth and home and say, 'My son is yet alive: I shall go and see him before I die.'"

And here his voice slightly quivered, for he thought of the Loraines' pew, and he looked a little closer to his book.

And there was deep silence in the church so that you might have heard a pin fall, only poor old Nanny coughed and looked round at Mrs. Tilley and smiled and nodded. Who would have thought it was poor Nanny's last church-going, for it was : the next time she came it was in her coffin—only a fortnight after. But never mind, it is all right with Nanny.

"And thus," said the clergyman, "it is so important to build at once some fair building, some lasting superstructure on this foundation ; some act of definite gratitude and worship ; some act of self-denial to be continued till the end of life—for to receive mercies of the LORD and not to return a loving and grateful heart would be indeed a great sin." And here Mr. Seymour's voice grew loud, for he felt deeply what he said. "I know some here may be inclined to say, 'alas, I have little to rejoice in—no son has returned to me. This sad war has made me desolate.' But oh, good Christian, do not so repine ; perhaps you have more reason to be thankful than you know. Those whom the LORD has taken away perhaps in the fiery trial were brought nearer to GOD and more to penitence than they ever would have been had their lot not been cast where it was. God comfort you, poor soul, and cause that your heavy chastisement may help you heavenwards, and believe that though 'the sorrow may endure for the night, joy cometh in the morning.' The LORD saith to thee, 'Weep not.'"

And here the kind man found his eye fixed on a

distant corner, near the west door, where Sally sat in her widow's weeds, and her little boy beside her, for one of those War Office letters had come, giving certain proof that her husband had died, and that she was one of the losers by the war ; and Mr. Seymour thought of her, and so did poor Nanny, for again she looked at her friend between a smile and a tear and said half aloud, " Ah, the Lord have mercy upon us," and she took a glance round at Sally.

" But for you who have so sufficient and abundant cause of gratitude in restoration to your own again ; let your first offering be a devotion more than ever to the duties of your respective relations in life. Let the mother more than ever fulfil her duty to her child, and the son love and cherish the declining days of his parent, to whom God has so unexpectedly given him back—showing by a filial, dutiful, respectful manner and heart towards his parents, how much he feels that the keeping of the fifth commandment is among the foundation stones of all religion," for Mr. Seymour, good man, never could get rid of the old fashioned prejudice that children ought to honour their parents ; and when he came to this part many thought of Mrs. Allen and her son, who were both that night in church, having returned with Cicely from Scutari. Though his arm was in a sling, and his face very pale ; never had the features of the young man been more strikingly manly than on that evening when he came with his mother to return God thanks in the old Church. The tear sprang to young Allen's eye, and he felt humbler and softer in heart than he ever had before.

" And another duty following on this gratitude we

owe to the wise Disposer of events is to draw together more than ever rich and poor in a parish like this, which as the good Bishop somewhere says, (he meant Bishop Wilson, for he was always *the* good Bishop in Mr. Seymour's parlance) is like a church in epitome. Well, even war, good friends, has drawn together rich and poor in weal and woe on the battle-field. Then let us draw together more than ever now; hushing all naughty questions; forgiving all disputes; aiding and loving one another; the rich helping and sympathizing with the poor, and the poor being respectful to those over them—which last is a much wanted feature in a well ordered village; and this war does indeed suggest both these duties inasmuch as it has so singularly brought out the kindliness and heroic example yielded by the officers to the men, and the fidelity and attachment of many a private soldier to his officer." And here he paused, for he thought of John Dennis, who was sitting under the west window with his mother on one side of him and Jane on the other, and his father behind; and when Jane heard this she began to cry, and could not help saying to Sally Birch, "that means our John," only Mrs. Dennis gave her a push and said, "for shame, child." Nevertheless Mrs. Dennis was crying too, and longed to say the same to every body in the church; and old Nanny looked round at the west window. Dear old Nanny: those old people are a wonderful part in a village church!

"And," said Mr. Seymour, after saying much more, which I have no room to tell, "let all young people who have life before them learn from this sad war how great

the vicissitudes of life are, and how needful it is to yield themselves from their early days to the blessed discipline of a religious life. Then all will go well, and if trouble and even death come it will find them well prepared and be never amiss." And here the good man came to a dead pause, and he could not go on, for he thought of Jessy who sat below him with her kind young face looking up at him and how she was going to marry Leonard Loraine the next week; and it was natural after all the sorrows and anxieties of the past that the kind-hearted father should feel deeply touched on such an occasion, when he remembered the troubles which might crowd in to the span of life of two young persons. And in that pause some were heard to sob audibly, for indeed that evening the village of Brandon was like one family gathered together, each one knowing the other. And all loved Leonard and Jessy; and old Nanny looked at Jessy and shook her head and lifted up her old withered hands. And after a little more the clergyman stopped, and all rose with one great simultaneous move to give the ascription of all glory, praise, and honour to "Him Who liveth for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords." And never did a congregation go out with more solemnity than that: and many eyes were fixed on Jessy's face as she leaning on Leonard's arm left the church with him.

Severe had been the blow to Jessy's frame. But after anxious watching the flush of health came back, and the large blue eye looked like itself in other days, for Leonard had come back. And so tenacious was her heart of him that all advised he should take her

to his home. And so, good reader, who have borne so long with this tedious tale of Jessy's sorrows, and Leonard's fortunes, you shall but be wearied further with the account of their marriage day, and they will trouble you no more. And inasmuch as I have one or two more marriages to speak of I will knit all together, for I am the historian of no very distant period of events.

And very happy was all Brandon on the day of Jessy's bridal. No home was sad. Though, as God would have it, the funeral bell did toll on that morning, for dear old Nanny had died quite suddenly: but never mind, she was threescore years and ten, and ten more added, and never did any good soul leave this frail tenement, more full of years, and hope for heaven than did Nanny. All regretted but none lamented her, for she has gone home a little before the rest, having been a great example of a good and holy woman: Poor old Mrs. Tilley was the greatest sufferer. As Nanny died on Jessy's Bridal day, so is there ever a bitter herb in every feast; a cloud which chequers the sunshine, so the funeral bell ever pursues the other bells through the marriage chime.

All were busy on that bridal day. Mrs. Mulso was all for gathering flowers, for she loved flowers so; but chrysanthemums were the best she could find, and right beautiful they were which she got, but she did not like them much, for they were not mentioned by Perdita in "Winter's Tale," and the only thoroughly authorised version of flower-list which Mrs. Mulso recognised was Perdita's.

But nevertheless, the Shakspeare lay open that morning on Mrs. Mulso's table to ascertain if Perdita did mention any flower which could be got now.

Per.

"The year growing ancient

Not yet on summer's death, not on the birth
Of trembling winter—the fairest flowers o' the season,
Are our carnations, and streak'd gilly flowers,
Which some call nature's bastards, of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren ; and I care not
To get slips of them."

"Here's flowers for you ;

Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram ;
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping ; these are flowers
Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given
To men of middle age."

"I would I had some flowers o' the spring, that might
Become your time of day ; and yours, and yours.

Oh, Proserpina,

For the flowers now, that frightened, thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon ! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids ; bold oxlips, and
The crown imperial : lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one ! O, these I lack,
To make you garlands of ; and, my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er."

So the chrysanthemums were unauthorised.

"But my pretty one will look beautiful in anything,"
said Mrs. Mulso, "living or dead, she would become
and adorn the very flowers which adorned her."

" Lay her in the earth,
And from her fair and unspotted flesh
Will violets spring."

The bustle and preparation were very great ; for more matters than one which might interest my readers ; though if not, what interested the Loraines considerably, was going on. I mean Cicely and Allen had, as some said, become so struck with each other at Scutari, and on the voyage home, as Mrs. Thorburn guessed ; had always been so pleased with each other since Allen first came to Brandon, as Peggy Tomkins averred ; had been acquainted years since clandestinely at Scarborough, as Mrs. Humphrey asserted ; were very indifferent about the matter now, as Cicely gave out on all sides, though by no means supported in this by Allen, who evidently did care a great deal about it ; well, Cicely and Allen were going to be married ; and it bid fair to be as happy a marriage as this changeful world could see, bating and saving of course that of Leonard and Jessy.

And now the day came, and all was ready ; the day was as late November days usually are, not very bright or very dull. Mrs. Mulso had taken up her abode at the parsonage two days before, since Jessy had no mother to help her, and the constant bustle in which Mrs. Mulso kept Jessy made the poor girl wish she might have been left to herself and her own quiet preparations. Quiet, but oh, so full of peace and joy ! for where the heart's full love goes, what ever casts a shadow ? Crowns, jewels, wealth, honours, palaces, ay, even old houses and brothers fade

away before that one on whom the whole heart had been fixed. As the man says somewhere in the play :

“ I loved Ophelia, forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.”

And Jessie realised this more than I can say. That Leonard had come back, and would be her companion in life's journey was to her so sweet and absorbing a thought, that it paled all other lights away. It was to her like a dream, very calm and beautiful, and we feel while we dream, that it is not all true and real, and yet—there it is : so Jessie felt about Leonard and her bridal day ; all the future was indifferent to her. Trials and separation, and disappointments, of course they must endure, but never mind, they would come with Leonard, and with him she felt she could bear anything in life's rough journey—come weal come woe ; and still Jessie had learnt hard lessons : she had been early schooled and disciplined in the school which best teaches that there is no dependence on aught but God. He only in life's great circle stretching out before the beginning and after the end. The same clear unfading light, be the forms which pass before it calm or troubled. He never fails, and when all human aid drops, and human love disappoints, His voice is heard far above winds and waters,—“It is I, be not afraid.” Such were the deep calm lessons which Mrs. Thorburn had taught Jessie, and Jessie had learned them well.

Mr. Seymour was standing in the old study, employed on such a morning as we can best imagine, waiting his child's arrival, who was with Mrs. Mulso

and Mrs. Thorburn in her room. The sickly sunbeam played through the window on the melancholy portrait of Cowper and the chrysanthemums which stood offering their ragged beauty on the table, and on the gilt of the books which peered beneath the leathers. And there he stood waiting—waiting for Jessy to come. Never was he more agitated, for it was not Mr. Seymour's habit to be agitated about anything, but he was to-day.

At length he heard her coming, the door opened, and looking very pale but very lovely, Jessy entered. Mrs. Mulso followed, arranging the folds of her long veil, and not speaking, because she would have cried if she had. Mrs. Thorburn followed too, with her quiet, patient face, the home of repose and the refuge of the unhappy. Jessy's face was exceedingly pale, and her eyes, ever so blue and large, now had in them a sweeter calmer look than they ever had before, as if she felt, "now I have entered my harbour after the long storm, and I am at rest." Around her head was a wreath of artificial jessamine, and in it woven that jessamine bough which Leonard gave her, and she had never lost. Though now it was but a bare and leafless thing, yet memory is often dear when stripped of every living reality. We cling to the stems of life when each leaf has fallen off our past, and sweeps withered and decaying by; but we see the germ of the future, the being clothed upon in immortality, and we are satisfied. Her dress was white, all white, very simple, but very lovely. The only colour about her dress was from one large emerald which gleamed from the bracelet which her

father had given her: though even that was set in pearls, she was so fond of white. Yes, and one other colour, a little bunch of everlasting flowers, which old Nanny gave Jessy yesterday as she lay dying, and Jessy went to see her, and the poor old thing reached down a little bunch of the flowers, which she said she had treasured up to give Jessy on her bridal day. "Which day, dear young lady, I shall not live to see, for I have had my call. I am sorry if my passing bell should disturb your chimes, but don't fret for me, I have seen my fourscore years, and am very thankful the LORD has bid me come. God bless you, dear young lady, and give you a long and happy life here and for ever." And old Nanny kissed Jessy's young fair hand, and smiled as she blest her. She died three hours after, and Jessy wore her everlasting flowers, a gleam of yellow on the pure white. Grace held her hand, looking up in Jessy's face, as she entered the room, *not* quite knowing whether it was a matter to smile at or to weep at. Alice would have cried, but Grace was undetermined. Mr. Seymour drew his child to his bosom and wept aloud. "The LORD of heaven bless thee, my child," and he could say no more: so they too wept together, while Mrs. Mulso stood and looked at the little green paper portrait of Ophelia, and Grace kissed Mrs. Thorburn's hand to prevent its being seen that she was crying too.

And so they went to church; the churchyard gate was crowded, and the pathway lined with people, and flowers, all the season could give, were strewed around. Leonard and Maxwell were already there. Maxwell

looked grave and his eye was fixed on Jessy, as she entered, and he started forward to meet her, and then drew back, as if he had gone too far, though why, or to what neither he nor you could tell.

Cicely of course, and Alice, and Grace were all bridesmaids; the poor came in great numbers into the church, and many stayed to receive the Holy Communion, which was celebrated by Leonard's and Jessy's earnest wish. Mr. Seymour performed the service, and Mr. Randall, who had specially requested it, was with him. Few village scenes could have been more beautiful and more touching. Allen was there with his mother, and he thought of the proud day when Cicely Loraine would be his bride.

As Leonard led Jessy out of the church, the bells struck up their heavenly music, and though the single bell which had tolled for old Nanny chased the others backwards and forwards through the chimes, it sounded to ears attuned but as God's blest warning mingling with the joys of time, for not one there regretted her absence, as they knew whither she had gone. As Leonard and his wife walked down, all the people pressed forward to see her, village children gave their offerings, and the aged gave their blessing.

"Go, go, John, make haste, see, Mrs. Loraine is looking for you," said little Jane, pushing her brother forward, who had with soldier-like respect, drawn a little back. Jane seized her brother's hand and dragged him forward, and as Jessy was entering the carriage she paused one moment as she looked for John, and while no one spoke in the listening, gazing crowd, and scarce

a sound was heard save the swelling bells, Jessy put out her hand to John, as she placed in his a Bible, and with a voice which trembled with the emotion of the moment, she said,

"Thank you a thousand times, John, for all your kindness to Mr. Leonard, may God reward you."

Poor Dennis did not, for he could not speak. But as he paused, Mr. Seymour taking Jessy's hand in his, said, "And has my Jessy no one else to speak to?"

"My dear, dear father," said the trembling voice; "no one else! oh, yes! how many! No day of life shall pass when I have left you, that I will not pray that He may pour every blessing on your head." She said no more, as Leonard drew her off.

And Dennis closed the door, and as the carriage moved away, Leonard caught Dennis's hand as he stood beside the window. "God bless you, John, a thousand times for all you have done for me."

In another hour the churchyard was empty, and the bells were still: and the silent tower seemed to bid us go elsewhere to learn the future history of Jessy Lorraine, and the after fortunes of "Leonard and Dennis."









